









# NEGRO LIFE IN THE SOUTH

PRESENT CONDITIONS  
AND NEEDS

BY

W. D. WEATHERFORD, PH.D.

WITH A SPECIAL CHAPTER  
ON THE ECONOMIC CON-  
DITION OF THE NEGRO

BY

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DEDICATED TO THE COLLEGE MEN OF  
THE SOUTH, IN WHOSE TOLERANT  
SPIRIT AND UNSELFISH INTEREST  
LIES THE HOPE OF THE NEGRO RACE.







## PREFACE

During the month of April, 1908, a company of seven men, four negroes and three white men, came together in the City of Atlanta to discuss the present race question, with special reference to what the college men of the South might do to better conditions. Those present in this conference were Dr. W. R. Lambuth, Missionary Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Dr. Stewart R. Roberts, formerly a professor at Emory College, Georgia, now professor of physiology in the Atlanta School of Physicians and Surgeons; President John Hope, of Atlanta Baptist College (colored), a colored man of broad education and scholarly spirit; Professor John Wesley Gilbert, one of the most scholarly and sane minded negro men in the South; Messrs. W. A. Hunton and J. E. Moorland, secretaries of the Colored Department, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, and the author.

We spent six hours in a very thorough and earnest conference, the result being a unanimous vote to have a text book prepared on the negro in the South, which could be used in the Home Mission classes of the College Young Men's Christian Associations. The task of preparing this text book was placed upon the author by

this committee. On one particular phase of this study, the economic conditions, I have called to my assistance an expert, who is specially qualified to speak on this subject. Dr. G. W. Dyer, who writes this chapter, is a Virginian, who was reared in the midst of the economic reconstruction after the war, and has been a close student of every phase of economic life in the South. He was graduated from two Southern colleges, Randolph Macon and Vanderbilt University, and holds his doctor's degree from the University of Chicago. He is now Assistant Professor of Economics and Sociology in Vanderbilt University.

It may be worth while to say that the author is a Southern man, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, and, since leaving college, has been the Student Secretary of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations for the South.

It will thus appear that this volume has been prepared by those who have spent their lives in the midst of the conditions about which they write. They, therefore, have no reason to be prejudiced for or against the negro any more than should any other Christian man of the section, save wherein a thorough study of conditions may have brought new convictions.

It is difficult always to think calmly and to speak without passion on a problem such as this, but a deliberate attempt has been made to state the facts in all fairness and calmness. It is believed that the educated men of the South will be glad to study these facts in the same

spirit. In them alone do we have any large hope, for most of the untrained men are too full of prejudice to face fairly or solve justly such a momentous question. On the college men, therefore, rests the burden of responsibility in this matter.

If this little volume arouses new interest, and stimulates such careful study as will help toward the proper solution of this, the nation's greatest problem, the writers of the same will be more than satisfied.

W. D. WEATHERFORD.

Nashville, Tenn.,  
June, 1, 1910.



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# I

## WHY STUDY THE NEGRO QUESTION?

## THE DESERTED PLANTATION

Oh, de grubbin'-hoe's a-rustin' in de co'nah,  
An' de plow's a-tumblin' down in de fiel',  
While de whippo'will's a-wailin' lak a mou'nah  
When his stubbo'n hea't is tryin' ha'd to yiel'.

In de furrers whah de co'n was allus wavin',  
Now de weeds is growin' green an' rank an' tall;  
An' de swallers roun' de whole place is a-bravin'  
Lak dey thought deir folks had allus owned it all.

An' de big house stan's all quiet lak an' solemn,  
Not a blessed soul in pa'lor, po'ch, er lawn;  
Not a guest, ner not a ca'iage lef' to haul 'em,  
Fu' de ones dat tu'ned de latch-string out air gone.

An' de banjo's voice is silent in de qua'ters,  
D'ain't a hymn ner co'n-song ringin' in de air;  
But de murmur of a branch's passin' waters  
Is de only soun' dat breks de stillness dere.

Whah's de da'kies, dem dat used to be a-dancin'  
Ev'ry night befo' de ole cabin do'?  
Whah's de chillun, dem dat used to be a-prancin'  
Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de flo'?

Whah's ole Uncle Mordecai an' Uncle Aaron?  
Whah's Aunt Doshy, Sam, an' 'Kit, an' all de res'?  
Whah's ole Tom de da'ky fiddlah, how's he farin'?  
Whah's de gals dat used to sing an' dance de bes'?

Gone! Not one o' dem is lef' to tell de story;  
Dey have lef' de deah ole place to fall away.  
Couldn't one o' dem dat seed it in its glory  
Stay to watch it in de hour of decay?

Dey have lef' de ole plantation to de swallers,  
But it hol's in me a lover till de las';  
Fu' I fin' hyeah in de memory dat follers  
All dat loved me an' dat I loved in de pas'.

So I'll stay an' watch de deah ole place an' tend it  
Ez I used to in de happy days gone by.  
'Twell do othah Mastah thinks it's time to end it,  
An' calls me to my quarters in de sky.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.





## I

# WHY STUDY THE NEGRO QUESTION?

### Foreword

In a time like ours when there are so many vital subjects demanding attention, and every subject is represented by many books, it is only legitimate that men should ask, "Why study the race question?" If it is not a question of first importance, if it does not have to do with our daily lives, if it does not vitally affect our physical, intellectual or moral well-being separately or collectively, then there can be no urgent necessity for the study of this question. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that this race problem enters into every relationship in Southern life, if it can be shown that our health, our intellectual advancement, and our moral lives are hedged about and often limited by the disease, the ignorance, and the immorality of another race; and if it can be further shown that we, as Christian college men, have an opportunity to better these conditions, we will have a sufficient reason for the study of so difficult a question.

### Our Ignorance of the Facts

My first answer to why we should study this question is, that we, as Southern college men, are woefully ignorant of the facts. It has been

said hundreds of times in print and from the platform that this question cannot be handled by the Northern man, because he is hundreds of miles removed from the scene of action, and does not know the facts. I believe that most of the Northern men are coming to accept the truth of this statement, and most of the best informed negroes, such as Booker T. Washington, are saying plainly that the North does not and cannot know, at least under present conditions, the real race problem. With this first statement, there is always coupled the second, that the Southern white man does know and can therefore solve the Southern race question. I deliberately challenge this statement. I feel perfectly sure that we, as Southern white men, know much more of real negro life than men of other sections can possibly know; I feel sure also of the fact that the best and more broad minded men of the South are more intensely interested in this question than men in any other section can possibly be; and I further feel sure that this question, if ever solved, must be solved by the broad minded Southern men leading the way and calling to their aid the broad minded and philanthropic men of all the nation. But do we as Southern men know the negro?

#### **Knowledge of Servant Class Only**

We know the negro as a hired servant in our homes. We know Aunt Mary, who cooks our meals, who waits on our table or acts as housemaid in our homes. We know John, the butler, or the coachman, or the gardener. We know

the day laborer who cleans the street or hauls the coal, or runs the grocery wagon. We know one or two negro men who, because of more intelligence, have positions as mail carriers, and perhaps we know half a dozen negroes who, because of skill and hard work, have entered the list of skilled employment. But all of these we know only in their work. We do not know their thought; we do not know their religious life; we do not know their home life.

### **The Church, the Home, the School**

Probably the three best indices of the real character of a people are their religion, their schools and their homes. Of the religious life of the negro, we, as Southern men, know almost nothing. Most of us have not visited half a dozen negro churches in our lives, and then only as onlookers, rather than attempting to enter into the spirit of the service and trying to find its real message. Neither have we studied their school life. We have passed the negro school house every day of our lives, have seen the negro college perched on the hill, but never have we visited these places more than once or twice to see what was actually going on in them. It has never occurred to most of us that these school buildings have anything of interest for us, and nine cases out of ten we do not know the negro preacher or the negro teacher who presides over the nearest church or school. Neither do we know the home life of the negro. I have again and again asked groups of college men how many negro homes they had ever entered.

I have rarely ever found men who had been in more than two or three or half a score at the most. Even where men have gone into negro homes, they have been of the poorer type. It has been the home of the washwoman, the cook or the servant man. The real life of the negro we do not know. There is much justice, though it hurts us as Southern men to admit it, in the statement of Ray Stannard Baker, after his careful and, on the whole, fair minded observations of conditions in the South:

“But, curiously enough, I found that these men rarely knew anything about the better class of negroes—those who were in business, or in independent occupations, those who owned their own homes. They did come into contact with the servant negro, the field hand, the common laborer, who make up, of course, the great mass of the race. On the other hand, the best class of negroes did not know the higher class of white people, and based their suspicion and hatred upon the acts of the poorer sort of whites, with whom they naturally come into contact. The best elements of the two races are as far apart as if they lived in different continents; and that is one of the chief causes of the growing danger in the Southern situation. It is a striking fact that one of the first—almost instinctive—efforts at reconstruction after the Atlanta riot was to bring the best element of both races together, so that they might, by becoming acquainted and gaining confidence in each other, allay suspicion and bring influence to bear on the

lawless elements of both white people and colored."<sup>1</sup>

It is not fair to judge a race by its weaker exponents alone, neither is it fair to judge a race simply by one aspect of its life. We must know its whole life before we can claim to know the race. If we are to have a right to speak with any authority on this race question, and if we are to have our proper share in bringing about a true race adjustment, we will need to study with care all the essential activities of this race. To what other group of men can this appeal be so fairly made, and from what other group of men should there be such ready response as from college men?

### **Self-Preservation**

Again, it is important that we study this question, because only a thorough knowledge of the situation will enable us to take such steps as will insure our own safety—physical, mental and moral. However carefully we may guard our contact with the negro—and no sane white man in the South, and few, if any, sane negroes believe in promiscuous mingling—there can be no doubt that the destiny of the Southern white man is inextricably intertwined with that of the Southern black man. Whatever affects one, affects the other, whether we want it so or not.

### **Health Relations**

Every day we put our health in the hands of the negro, because he cooks our meals, washes our

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<sup>1</sup> "Following the Color Line," p. 44.

linen, cleans our homes, and nurses our children. If he is clean and healthy, it is well with us; if he is unclean and diseased, woe be to the white man whom he serves. Recently a malignant epidemic of typhoid fever broke out in an Alabama female college. A number of girls died, many others were in bed for weeks and months, some of them will never be so well again. Prof. William Litterer, bacteriologist of Vanderbilt University, Medical Department, was asked to make an investigation of the cause of the epidemic, and after an exhaustive search the infection was traced to a negro boy employed as a dishwasher, "who was a walking arsenal of typhoid germs." Those mothers and fathers who lost their daughters in this epidemic would be easily convinced that it is worth while to make a careful study of the race problem with the purpose of seeing to it that there is better sanitation and health conditions among the negroes who work in our homes. Whether we sit down to dinner in our home or in a hotel, it is a vital question which cannot lightly be passed over—under what sanitary conditions does the negro who cooked this meal and the negro who served it live? To be indifferent to the health question of the negro is to be indifferent to the sickness and disease which may rob us of our health or the health and life of our own loved ones.

### **Intellectual Relations**

This is equally true of the intellectual life of the Southern white man. We are bound down

and hedged about by the ignorance of our servants and our laboring class. Not long since a college president was writing to me about a college graduate who wanted a place in Young Men's Christian Association work, and in his letter he apologized for the poor English of this student in the following words: "His weakest spot is his spoken English, as he grew up in a community so thickly populated by negroes that he has never been able to shake off some of the dialect." It is probably impossible ever to estimate just how much of a handicap are the superstitions, the prejudices and the ignorant fears, which are being daily poured into the minds of Southern childhood by the ignorant servant class. In simple self-defence, we must see to it that the negroes are freed from at least the grosser forms of ignorance and superstition.

### **Moral Contagion**

Nor can we escape the moral contagion of close contact with those who are morally leprous. The latest word of psychology and sociology is that character is not taught but character is caught. Character is as contagious as measles or confluent smallpox. Henry Drummond once said: "I become a part of every man I meet, and every man I meet becomes a part of me." Almost every child in the well-to-do Southern home is more in the companionship of the nurse than of the mother, up to the age of six—that is, during those very impressionable days when character is just taking shape. Even in the less wealthy homes, the

child is constantly thrown into the presence of the servants, and if these servants be immoral in any sense, the consequent detriment of character is sure.

The constant presence of those who are impure and immoral means the gradual lowering of ideals, the deadening of conscience, the loss of the sense of sin. Who of us has not seen just such a process going on in a Southern household?

#### **No Arraignment of Servants**

These words are not written as an arraignment of negro servants, for I am well aware that hundreds of servants are honest and true, and while they are usually ignorant as to books, they not infrequently have that truer knowledge gained from contact with life, and, at the same time, that unselfishness of spirit and genuineness of soul which makes them a real blessing to the home in which they work. But so long as there are many of the opposite type, so long as there are many who live in unsanitary hovels and are filthy in body, ignorant and superstitious in mind, and leprous in soul—just so long will they be a plague to our Southern white people. In the interest of self-defence, every intelligent white man must study this question, and be prepared to take his part in the physical, social, intellectual, and moral regeneration of this neglected race.

#### **Race Antagonism**

Again, there is need of study of this question because of the growing spirit of race antagonism



and unrest. That there is such an antagonism in certain sections can hardly be denied. The reasons for this are not far to seek. The passing away of the old-time darkey with his simplicity, love of the plantation, and devotion to the people of the "big house," the rise of the younger negro, with less respect, with less ability as a trained workman, with possibly less disposition to work; the rise also of the educated negro class, sometimes arrogant, always and rightly more independent; the passing of the old plantation owners who knew the negro far better than the present generation of white men; these have made possible less and less of real understanding between the two races, and have brought on many conditions of friction. Besides these natural causes of race antagonism, there have been three classes of men who have piled fuel on the fire and fanned the smouldering embers into flame.

### **Prejudiced Southern White Man**

The first is that class of Southern white men who are utterly incapable of seeing anything good in the negro. I met one of them not long since—a physician—who in one breath declared hell was too good for the negro criminal, and in the next breath claimed the negro had no soul. He was somewhat surprised and seemed not to catch the point when I asked him if he thought his horse would go to hell because in a fit of ill temper he kicked his master. But the more dangerous Southern white man is he who mounts the political stump and with wild gestic-

ulations cries, "Social Equality," "Negro Domination," "Race Amalgamation," and such other blood curdling shibboleths, and so stirs up such a race antagonism that men forget all about the real political issues, and the demagogue rides into office, at the expense of justice to the negro and the self-respect of the white man. *We have had all too many of these political demagogues—these so-called "defenders of the white man's honor and the white woman's virtue."* It is high time that the college should know enough about this question not to be browbeaten and befogged into supporting any such cheap gerrymanderism.

### **The Radical Negro**

The second man who stirs up race hatred is the radical negro, and I am sorry to say he frequently comes from the ranks of the educated. This type of man finds his best expression through the "Niagara Movement," organized by Prof. W. E. B. DuBois, the express object of which is to continually protest against all forms of discrimination. Its purpose seems not to be the helping of the colored race to be worthy of position, but the stirring up of that race to demand and take certain so-called rights. The public exponent of this ideal has been the "Guardian," published by William Monroe Trotter, in Boston. This group of men is hot in its denunciation of Booker T. Washington, because he believes in conciliation and constructive work. They believe that the whole *régime* of the present is wrong and should be destroyed. This attitude toward Washington is best displayed in a ref-

erence to him by Professor DuBois: "So thoroughly did he (Washington) learn the speech and thought of triumphant commercialism, and the ideals of material prosperity, that the picture of a lone black boy poring over a French grammar amid the weeds and dirt of a neglected home soon seemed to him the acme of absurdities. One wonders what Socrates and St. Francis of Assisi would say to this . . . It is as though Nature must make men narrow in order to give them force."<sup>1</sup>

These men can as little see any virtue in a Southern white man as the Southern demagogue can see virtue in the negro. I cannot better convey the spirit of bitterness and hatred of this radical negro wing than to give one or two quotations from some of its leaders: "In general," says William A. Sinclair—a South Carolina negro and a college graduate—"a spirit of cruel intolerance dominates the white population of the whole Southland. Its church life, despite the many excellent and truly Christian members, both men and women, betrays strange deformities and inconsistencies; in large measure, ignoring alike the Golden Rule, the Sermon on the Mount, the divinely beautiful lesson of the Good Samaritan, and, in short, the more vital and central truth of the entire teaching of Jesus himself—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."<sup>2</sup> Or, take another quotation from Professor Du Bois, which—whatever measure of truth or falsity there may be in it—has much more of

<sup>1</sup> "Souls of Black Folk," p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> "The Aftermath of Slavery," p. 4.

bitterness. Speaking of slavery, he says: "So after the war, and even to this day, the religious and ethical life of the South bows beneath this burden. Shrinking from facing the burning ethical questions that front it unrelentingly, the Southern Church clings all the more tenaciously to the letter of a wornout orthodoxy, while its inner, truer soul crouches before and fears to answer the problem of eight million black neighbors. It therefore assiduously 'preaches Christ crucified' in prayer meeting patois, and crucifies 'niggers' in unrelenting daily life."<sup>1</sup> Such wholesale and bitter denunciations of a whole people can be nothing else than the expression of prejudice rather than the word of statesmanship.

### **Northern Enthusiast**

The third disturbing element is that of the Northern enthusiast who feels sure he could settle the whole race question if he had a few years to give to it. It is a source of real rejoicing to most men who earnestly face this question that this tribe is rapidly dying out. Were it not for these disturbing elements, the relations between the races would be cordial enough. It is gratifying to note that in spite of them Dr. Booker T. Washington, after an extended tour through South Carolina, can say:

### **Booker T. Washington's Testimony**

"My object in going on this educational tour was to see for myself the actual condition of my own race, and to say a word wherever I could

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<sup>1</sup>"The Negro in the South," p. 170.

that would improve their life, and to note the actual relations existing between white people and black people, and to make a suggestion wherever I could that would further promote friendly relations. Of course, in a great State like South Carolina one cannot fail to see many things that are wrong, that are unjust, that need changing for the better. Notwithstanding this fact, I was surprised from the beginning to the end of the trip at the tremendous progress that the negro race is making, and at the friendly relations existing between black people and white people.

"In South Carolina, as in most parts of the South, I found the individual relations between black and white nearly all that could be hoped for. We frequently get a wrong impression of conditions in the South because we place too much dependence upon utterances made in Congress or in newspapers, or when some one is on parade. Everywhere I went I found at least one white man who believed implicitly in one negro; I found at least one negro who believed implicitly in one white man; and so it goes all through the South. So long as these individual relations are as kindly as they are, there is great hope for the future."<sup>1</sup>

The fact remains, however, that there is no small amount of unrest and race prejudice, which it behooves every sane searcher for truth and every true lover of his Southland to allay where possible. This can only be done after a careful and fair minded study of the whole race problem.

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<sup>1</sup> *Outlook*, May 1, 1909.

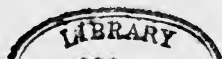
### Rightly Directed Progress

There is also need for study of this problem in order that the future advancement of the negro may be in the right direction. If we look to the single department of education, we must be convinced that the negro is advancing and will continue to advance whether we like it or not. If we of the South do not help direct this growing intellectual life, they of the North will, and we shall have no one but ourselves to blame if the education is falsely directed. Any one who fairly investigates the history of Northern philanthropy must be struck with the large unselfishness of the givers, even if their zeal does sometimes seem to act without sufficient knowledge. Much of this money has been poorly administered because we as Southern men, who ought to have been in position to give sane counsel, have not sufficiently studied this question to be able to formulate any reasonable constructive policy. After his tour through South Carolina to which I have referred, Booker T. Washington wrote to the *Outlook*:

"I was convinced, too, as I made this trip through the State of South Carolina, that more and more in the future an effort should be made to speak directly to the best type of Southern white people about our methods and aims in the education of the negro. There is too much discussion at long distance. In many cases the white people in the South do not understand the methods that are being pursued, nor the object sought. In proportion as we are perfectly frank with each other the difficulties are going to dis-

appear, and larger amounts of money are going to be forthcoming from the South itself for the education of the black man."

There is further need of a constructive educational policy for the negro, because for every dollar given by Northern philanthropy, we ourselves have paid out of our own pockets probably ten dollars in taxes toward the negro public school. Up to 1906 it was estimated by the United States Commissioner of Education that for this purpose alone the South had paid \$132,000,000 since the war. Mr. W. T. B. Williams, Field Agent of the Slater Fund, writing in the "Southern Workman," Nov., 1908, estimates the amount spent on negro public schools since 1870 at \$155,000,000. During this period the illiteracy of the negro has been reduced by half. The negro is therefore being educated, however slowly. But how is he being educated? Is his increasing knowledge such as fits him for larger and better usefulness and for more worthy citizenship? Is he being educated away from life or into a truer life? These are the pertinent questions which every educated man of to-day must help to answer. Up to the present time, be it said to our shame, we have done little as Southern white men to answer these questions properly. It is no more than truth to say that General Armstrong, a Northern white man and a Union soldier, the founder of Hampton Institute, and Booker T. Washington, a Southern negro and an ex-slave, the founder of Tuskegee, have probably done more than any dozen Southern white men to answer these questions aright.



We need more Southern men who can write and speak with the knowledge and sanity of Edgar Gardner Murphy, in his "The Present South" if we are to give proper direction to this new intellectual movement.

### **Encouragement**

Again, we should study this question in order that we may know the encouragement of the negro's progress. Not a few Southern men have become darkly pessimistic about the future of the negro race. Some think that the door of hope is forever shut in his face. I must confess that, although a Southern man, reared in the midst of the large negro population of Texas, and attending college in Nashville, a city where negro education is at its best, I have been constantly surprised at the marvellous progress of the negro race. In 1908, Ray Stannard Baker estimated that negroes owned 1,400,000 acres of land in the State of Georgia alone, and paid taxes on \$28,000,000 worth of property. Prof. John W. Gilbert, one of the most capable and sane negro leaders in the South, has recently estimated that negroes own 200,000 farms, worth approximately \$700,000,000, and that \$500,000,000 worth of these farms are entirely free of debt; that in 1900, in cities and villages, negroes owned 126,329 homes free from debt; and that negroes—not stinting in their contributions—have built churches valued at \$40,000,000. Forty-eight per cent. of the race are members of churches, and the generous contributions they make annually to missions would put



to shame many of our wealthy white churches. Booker T. Washington has said, again and again, that fifty-seven per cent. of the negro race is now literate, although forty years ago illiteracy was well-nigh universal.

But these figures are abstract, and the real story of race progress is only thoroughly understood when one goes into the best barber shop in Atlanta and finds it owned and operated by a negro, with negro barbers at the chairs, or visits a Georgia plantation of a thousand acres—as it is possible to do—owned by one negro, or goes into the home of an educated negro, as I did recently in Texas—where the building is commodious and modern, where there are good carpets on the floors, a piano in the parlor, and you could not tell from appearances that a white banker did not live there. Or, if one wants further to be convinced of this progress, let him visit a high-grade negro church. Some months ago one of the connectional officers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and I had to break our journey across the South by stopping in a Southern city to spend Sunday. At eleven o'clock we went up to the first church and listened to a good average sermon from the pastor. After the service we went for a walk before dinner and chanced to come upon a leading negro church. We went in, and found the first floor filled to overflowing with a well-dressed, orderly and reverent congregation—it would seem more than a thousand—so we were shown to the gallery by a polite and altogether well-appearing negro. The sermon had just

begun from the text: "I am the way, the truth and the life." It was clear, logical, filled with practical and helpful truth, and as it progressed my connectional officer and preacher friend leaned over and whispered to me: "The white church would do mighty well to trade preachers with this negro church." And he was perfectly right. The whole service was of a high order, and would have done grace to any white church I ever attended.

### **Tuskegee**

Or, if one prefers, let him visit Tuskegee, and look into the faces of fourteen hundred negro boys and girls; hear their trained chorus of a hundred voices render the old plantation melodies with matchless power; go to their wood shops, blacksmith shops, model laundry, bakery, millinery establishment, and see the splendid work done; hold a Bible study institute for five hours on a hot spring day without anybody leaving; see five hundred and twenty-five men enroll in the voluntary study of the Bible; and three years later learn that the number has grown to seven hundred and thirty; finally, let him learn that not a single graduate of this school has ever been in jail for any crime whatsoever—and if he does not have some hope for the negro and believe he is making substantial progress, he would be hard to convince.

### **Physical Needs**

Lastly, we should study the problem for the sake of the help it will enable us to render a

backward race in its hour of need. These needs are, first of all, physical. So long as millions of these people live in the one-roomed cabin, which is poorly ventilated, poorly heated, and not lighted at all; so long as millions more live in the crowded tenement section or in the damp alleys of our cities in houses that have neither sanitation nor comfort; so long as the bath tub is almost an unknown luxury in the great mass of negro homes; so long as four, five, or even ten negroes are sleeping in one crowded little tenement room; so long as the death rate of negroes is from eight to twelve more per thousand than that for white people; so long as deaths from venereal diseases among colored people are six to seven times as great as among white people—if the Alabama statistics for certain periods can be trusted—and so long as the negro mortality from consumption in many of our leading cities is from fifty to one hundred and fifty per cent. in advance of the corresponding white mortality—just so long will the Southern white man have an obligation to study these facts, find their causes, and apply cures.

### **Intellectual Needs**

The next great need of the negro is training. While marvellous progress has been made, forty-three per cent. of this race is illiterate. Even if \$155,000,000 has been spent on public schools for negroes since 1870, the average length of school term has never been and is not now over seventy days per year<sup>1</sup> According to the report

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<sup>1</sup> School reports for the present year make a much better showing than this.

of the Superintendent of Colored Normal Schools in North Carolina for the year 1908, the average cost of public school buildings used for negro schools was \$124.37. Out of 2,198 such buildings, only 64 had patent desks—all the others being furnished with simple benches. This makes any genuine school work next to impossible. In thirty counties in this State, the country school teachers were paid less than seventeen dollars per month on the average, and in these counties there were 59,665 negro children of school age, and yet it is a known fact that, in proportion to her wealth, North Carolina is spending more than almost any other State in the Union on the education of her youth. Surely the knowledge of such facts should impel us to do more for general education. In addition, there is the greatest need of industrial and mechanical education. According to a computation of Thomas Jesse Jones in the "Southern Workman," March, 1909, the product per agricultural worker in 1900 was for the State of Iowa, \$1,088; for New Hampshire, \$477; Alabama, \$150.98; North Carolina, \$149.75; South Carolina, \$147.46, or the Iowa worker, largely because of greater skill, is able to produce more than seven times as much wealth annually as the worker in South Carolina. We in the South cannot afford to allow this disparity of wealth producing ability to continue. There are at present a few thousand students in industrial schools like Tuskegee and Hampton Institute, but the number ought to be multiplied ten-fold. Who will see that this is done if we of the South remain ignorant of our great in-

dustrial need? Why leave this mass of humanity in a half-fed and half-starved condition? Why not train their hands and their heads so that they may not only secure competence for themselves, but add millions annually to the wealth of the section. What we need more than any other one element in our Southern industrial life is trained laborers. There are eight million negroes in our very midst; the graduates of Hampton and Tuskegee have forever dispelled the doubt that they can be made efficient workmen by proper training; when will there be enough of constructive study and statesmanship in the South to harness this mighty force and make it the wonder of the world in its wealth producing power?

As Mr. Murphy has put it: "The only real peril of our situation is, not in any aspect of the negro's wise and legitimate progress, but rather in the danger that the negro will know so little, will do so little, and will increasingly care so little about knowing and doing, that the great black mass of his numbers, his ignorance, his idleness, and his lethargy will drag forever like a cancerous and suffocating burden at the heart of our Southern life,"<sup>1</sup>

### Moral Needs

Lastly, one must mention the moral needs of the negro. While forty-eight per cent. of the whole colored population of the South has a church affiliation, and while \$40,000,000 have been invested in churches, there is nevertheless a terrible moral corruption that eats at the vitals

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<sup>1</sup> "The Present South," p. 61.

of the negro race. A Christian negro physician told me recently that ninety-eight per cent. was a low estimate for the negro men who have been socially impure. Cheap whiskey and cocaine are doing their deadly work for literally thousands of negro men and women. Profanity, gambling and debauchery are everywhere prevalent. All of these vices are destroying the body and damning the souls of countless thousands. Add to this the fact that in the rural churches the religion is all too frequently of an emotional type, which is completely divorced from ethical action, and the further fact that not infrequently the minister is himself leprous with the sins of laziness, dishonesty and impurity and the picture darkens until one is most sick at heart.

X What shall we do about such crying needs as these? Shall we close our eyes and remain in blissful ignorance? Shall we waive the whole matter aside and say that the race is unworthy of our attention and effort? Or shall we fairly face these problems and do our part in bringing to them a real solution? It is always easier to close one's eyes to the hard and unpleasant things of life—but is it always manly? No man has ever been a prophet to humanity who has not faced the facts, however unpleasant. He who is not willing to bear the heartache of knowing the world's sorrow and suffering and sin can never know the joy of being a messenger of a new and brighter day. One is profoundly sorry for that sweet girl graduate who went home with her diploma in her hand after hearing a commencement address on the struggle of men, and, throw-

ing herself into a chair, said: "Oh, mother, I wish people wouldn't talk so much about the struggles and hardships of the masses—it makes one so uncomfortable."

### **The White Man's Obligation**

It is just because the negro is ignorant; just because he is having a hard battle to win industrial competence; just because he is sinking under the burdens of awful diseases; and just because he has not yet attained unto the full stature of moral manhood that every college man is under obligation to know and better his condition. It is because we of the South love our homes and want to protect them, that we must no longer remain ignorant of this question. It is because we are born in a section immortalized by such spirits as Lee and Jackson, who gave their lives for its welfare, that we, in this hour of our Southland's greatest need, will not prove traitors, but will, with the hearts of true sons, bring to its aid the largest knowledge, the sanest judgment, the clearest thought which loyal sons can bring.





## II

# THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE NEGRO

## SLOW THROUGH THE DARK

Slow moves the pageant of a climbing race;  
Their footsteps drag far, far below the height,  
And, unprevailing by their utmost might,  
Seems faltering downward from each won place.  
No strange, swift-sprung exception we; we trace  
A devious way thro' dim, uncertain light—  
Our hope, through the long-vistaed years, a sight  
Of that our Captain's soul sees face to face.  
Who, faithless, faltering that the road is steep,  
Now raiseth up his drear insistent cry?  
Who stoppeth here to spend a while in sleep,  
Or curses that the storm obscures the sky?  
Heed not the darkness round you, dull and deep;  
The clouds grown thickest when the summit's high.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

## II

# THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE NEGRO

### Economic Relationships

To treat the negro from the economic point of view strictly would be most difficult. The economic life of the negro is so peculiarly and so vitally connected with many other phases of his life that it is necessary to touch upon much that is not in any real sense economic, in order to understand his peculiarities as an economic factor in our complex life. To understand any phase of the life of the negro, his whole life must be studied, not only in this country, but in Africa as well. The negro problem never can be understood at all adequately in this country until we know more of his peculiar racial characteristics, which can be learned only by a very thorough study of the negro in his native land. Of course, no such study is attempted here, but is merely suggested as a prerequisite to a proper understanding of this most intricate problem.

### The Discussion Tentative

The subject matter of this paper is not meant to be taken in any sense as authoritative, though the dogmatic form of expression is sometimes used for the sake of emphasis. We know too

little of this problem at the present time for any one to speak with authority; certainly the writer claims no such right. What is here said is meant to be taken as only suggestive. A fuller knowledge of the subject may render every position here taken untenable. But if this study proves suggestive and arouses some interest in a more thorough study of the economic phases of the negro life it will not be without profit.

### **African Background**

The negro was brought to this country as a savage. In his native land he had made practically no progress at all within historic times. He was thousands of years behind any other people in the world that could be called in any real sense civilized, and his manner of life was that of the most ignorant and the lowest of men. "The native in East Africa is untold thousands of years younger than Abraham, and untold thousands of years nearer the monkey than were Abraham's Phoenician kinsfolk," says Dr. W. S. Rainsford, who has recently made a first hand study of the African in Africa.

### **African Slavery and its Results**

The negro had been accustomed to slavery before he was brought to this country. In Africa the natives held each other in slavery, and it is said that this slavery was of the lowest grade in morals. It was of such a nature that it doubtless did practically nothing in giving the African that training in systematic, regular work which he so much needs. In Africa the native had never

shown the least capacity to grapple successfully with any serious problem of civilization, and he seemed to be destined to move indefinitely in that very circumscribed circle fixed for him by his natural environment. His life of carnage and idleness and sensualism and pillage had paralyzed every intellectual faculty and had developed in him a roaming, restless disposition, a love of excitement; a distaste for systematic work that made him incapable of any advancement under his own direction, and made anything like self-mastery impossible.

### American Slavery

The first cargo of slaves was landed on the Virginia shore in 1619. They were brought in by the Dutch and were twenty in number. At this time the colonists were looking to the indentured white servants to supply the demands of the colony for extra labor, and for this and other reasons but few slaves were imported for a number of years. In 1650, thirty years after the landing of the first cargo, there were but about three hundred slaves in the colony of Virginia. But after the middle of the century, on account of an uprising of certain of Cromwell's soldiers, who were sent to Virginia as indentured servants after Charles II came to the throne, the Virginians passed a very stringent law against the landing of any one who had been convicted of any kind of crime, political or otherwise. This law doubtless affected materially the supply of white labor for the colony, and increased the demand for slaves. At any rate, the slaves began to come

in now in greater numbers, and by the end of the century the slave population was of considerable size. The growth of the slave population is shown by the following figures:

Year.	Slave Population in Virginia.
1619	20
1649	300
1671	2,000.
1700	6,000
1715	23,000
1763	150,000

### **New England Slave Traders**

The slaves, after the first few lots that were landed, were brought to this country in large measure by New England ship owners, who traded for them in Africa, and sold them to the Southern planters. The shipping industry was developed very early by New England, and the New Englanders found in the slave trade a thriving business. "During the Eighteenth Century a three-cornered trade was developed by New England, by means of which molasses was brought from the West Indies to New England, where it was manufactured into rum; this was taken to Africa and exchanged for slaves, who were sold in the West Indies or the Southern colonies."<sup>1</sup>

### **Economic Basis of Distribution**

Slavery was in vogue in all of the American colonies, but from the beginning the great

<sup>1</sup> "Economic History of the United States."—Bogart.

majority of the slaves were placed in the Southern colonies. The forces that determined the location of the slaves in the South rather than in the North were purely and exclusively economic forces. If the slaves had been more profitable in New England than in the South they would have been sold there and kept there. New England was a section of small farms and small farmers from the beginning, while the Southerners in considerable numbers farmed on a large scale almost from the beginning. This does not mean that farming on a large scale was the rule in the South at any time, as is commonly believed. The great majority of the farmers of the South from the beginning were small farmers. It was the enterprise and capacity and progressiveness of the leading men of the South, as well as the forces of the natural environment, that created a relatively stronger demand for the slaves in the Southern colonies.

### **Effects of Slavery on the South**

Perhaps no other phase of our history has been so persistently and so violently misinterpreted and so grossly misrepresented as that which deals with the economic effect of slavery on the South. This misrepresentation is not due to the prejudice engendered by the struggle between the two sections over the ethics of slavery, as may be believed; at least this is not the chief cause. Southern writers, as well as Northern writers, tell practically the same story, and are guilty of the same misrepresentations. The trouble is not prejudice, primarily, but ignorance; ignorance not only of

the simplest facts bearing on the subject, but of the elementary principles of economics as applied to industrial life.

The almost universal opinion with reference to the economic effect of slavery on the South is well expressed in a recent economic history of the United States by Professor Bogart, of Princeton University.<sup>1</sup> "While the country, as a whole," says Professor Bogart, "had made marvelous industrial progress during this period, the benefits were confined largely to the North and West. The great advances in manufacturers, in agricultural improvements, and in commerce had scarcely affected the South. In fact the South had lagged far behind the North in the industrial advance of the previous half century. The whirl and rush of this progress encompassed the South on every side. Yet, alone in all the world, she stood unmoved by it; in government, in society, in employment, in labor, the States of the South in 1860 were substantially what they had been in 1810, when the abolition of the slave trade had impressed upon their development the last modification of form of which it seemed susceptible."

#### **Southern Progress during Slavery**

Notwithstanding the above statement, which is the opinion of practically all of the leading historians, the South made great industrial progress before the Civil War. The South had considerably more wealth in proportion to population in 1860 than was possessed by the rest of the coun-

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<sup>1</sup> "Economic History of the United States."—Bogart.



try, counting the slaves as a part of the population. The value of farming implements in use in 1860 was one-seventh greater in the South than in the Northern and Western States in proportion to population. The per capita value of farming implements in Louisiana was more than three times that of New York, Pennsylvania, or Ohio. The South, in 1860, with more than one-fourth of the free population, possessed almost as many head of live stock as the remaining States of the Union.

### Banking

If we compare the South with the North and West with reference to banking, we find that the South had about one-third more capital invested per capita free population than the North and West, and a very much larger proportion of loans and deposits. New York is left out in this comparison, since New York belonged as much to the South as to the rest of the country, in a business way.

From 1850 to 1860 the increase in the cash valuation of farms was as follows:—

The Southern States.....	129%
The New England States.....	27%
The remaining States of the Union..	102%

### Railways

In 1860 the South had more miles of railroad than the rest of the country in proportion to free population and the percentage increase in railroad construction from 1850 to 1860 was as follows:

Southern States.....	350%
New England States.....	46%
Northern and Western States, including the New England States.....	320%

### **Manufacturing**

In 1850 the Southern States had invested in manufacturing \$90,615,214. In 1860, the amount of capital invested in manufacturing had increased to \$159,496,572. The percentage increase in manufacturing was greater for the South from 1850 to 1860 than for the rest of the country. In 1860 the Southern States had thirty cities of 8,000 population and more, with a combined population of 999,947.

### **Education**

In 1860, the South was spending more money for education in proportion to her free population than the rest of the country, and the State free public school system which originated in the South had made great progress, and millions of dollars were being spent each year on public school education.

A glance at the census reports for 1860 will show that the South was in the very forefront in material and educational progress in 1860, and that the general opinion of the life of this section before the Civil War is without foundation.

It can hardly be shown that slavery interfered materially with the economic progress of the South, and it is very probable that our industrial progress would have been very much the same as it is to-day had slavery continued.

**Effect of This Economic Institution on the Slaves**

What was the effect of slavery on the slave? There is, doubtless, much difference of opinion on this question, but perhaps all will agree that the slaves, as a whole, received great benefit from the institution of slavery. Slavery was essentially an economic institution, not a philanthropic enterprise. The slave owners were men of average philanthropic impulses, it is believed, and doubtless compared favorably with any other body of men of their day in this particular. But their chief motive in buying slaves and holding slaves was an economic motive, just as the chief motive of the employer of free labor was economic. Whatever advantages or disadvantages came to the slave by virtue of the institution of slavery were incidental, and the same may be said of the employment of free labor. By this it is not meant that economic motives always controlled in the attitude of the master to the slave. The economic was often sacrificed in the interest of humanity, and it is probable that the economic was oftener sacrificed by the slave owner in the interest of humanity than was done by the employer of free labor, since the moral obligation of the slave owner was greater than that of the employer of free labor.

However hard hearted and commercial the master may have been in some instances, it was against his economic interest as a rule to starve or maim or materially injure his slave, and in the main, slaves were well cared for and protected from injury, just as men care for and protect their stock from injury. It is very un-

usual for the class of men who owned slaves to injure and abuse and wilfully mistreat their horses and cows, and we are sure that the economic interest of the slave-owner protected the slave from any considerable amount of inhuman treatment, even if the master had been brutal by nature.

### Slave Ownership a Trust

While the economic was the chief motive in slave ownership, it was by no means the only motive; and there is abundance of proof that many masters accepted slave ownership as a sacred trust, and worked hard to lift the slave to a higher and better life.

But with all that may be said for philanthropic effort to help the negro—and surely much may be said in its behalf—it is probable that it was far better for the negro that the economic motive controlled in slavery even with the accompanying hardships, and sometimes gross abuses. It is often the case that the training that is worth most in the making of men is that which enlightened philanthropy would not choose. The African savage needed above everything else just such training as he got in the main under slavery in this country. Any other than such a vigorous and such a positive policy as the individual economic interest of slavery demanded would not have met the demands of his nature. While those who were responsible for the institution of slavery in this country deserve no special credit for these incidental and accidental effects of slavery, since their motives were chiefly eco-

nomic, the recognized beneficent effects of slavery on the negro should mitigate that criticism often heard against those who defended the institution.

### **Contact with Whites First Benefit of Slavery**

In what ways did slavery benefit the negro?<sup>1</sup> First, slavery brought the negro into vital touch with Christian civilization; it brought him in a close individual relation with men and women who were the heirs of all the ages. His removal from the environment of his own country made it much easier for him to break away from those forces that had held him at the very bottom of human society for untold ages. While many negroes lived in quarters and were in a measure cut off from much association with the white people, the great majority of the slaves were in close and continuous touch with white men and white women, and a very large proportion of them lived in the homes of the whites, and thus, for the first time in all their history, got a conception of Christian home life, which is so essential to the uplift of any people, and the lack of which has been the chief weakness of the negro. But even the negroes who lived in the big negro quarters were never separated from vital contact with the white man, whom they had an opportunity to observe and study and imitate at all times.

### **Segregation**

Second, slavery segregated the negroes from each other, and thus gave them a better oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. "The Negro in the South."—Booker T. Washington.

tunity to break away from the negro influence and substitute the influence of the whites. The common idea that the slaves belonged to a relatively small number of big slave holders is not in accord with the facts. About one-fifth of the slave holders owned only one slave, and a majority of the slave holders of the South owned five or less than five slaves. The average size of the family being about five, the man who owned five slaves, owned, as a rule, one man, one woman, and three children. The average number of slaves held by each owner was about ten. Slave ownership in the South was really very democratic, and it may be truly said that the great majority of the slave holders were either poor men or men in very moderate circumstances. The negroes for the most part segregated into small groups, were kept away from the excitement of the crowd, and were given an opportunity for individual development under conditions most favorable to the peculiar demands of their nature. Regular systematic work by day under intelligent direction, and the "patty rollers" by night kept the negro at home, and prevented him from spending his nights and much of his time in the day, as is his custom to do now, in seeking the deadly poison of excitement which his abnormal restless, nomadic nature craves.

### **Freedom from Excitement**

Third the slave was kept on the farm away from the excitement of the city. The census of 1860 shows that very few of the one million inhabitants of the cities of the South were slaves.

More than 900,000 of the inhabitants of the cities were white. No other place could have been more conducive to the development of those characteristics of which he was so much in need as the quiet country life of the rural South. But nothing short of slavery or some other powerful outside force could have held him in the country.

### **Systematic Habits of Life**

Fourth, slavery forced the negro to work, to work hard, to work systematically, and to work continuously. He was forced to live systematically, to eat and sleep, and rest systematically. All of this was absolutely new to him and was contrary to every inclination of his nature. Yet it was the training above all others he most needed. It was the lack of capacity to hold himself to systematic, regular work and systematic regular habits of life that constituted his chief weakness then as an economic factor and it is this that constitutes his chief weakness to-day. Perhaps no kind of philanthropic effort could have given him this training of which he was so much in need so successfully as slavery. Nothing but slavery with the economic motive in control could have succeeded at all adequately, it is believed, in training this savage nomad to regular habits of life and systematic, continuous work. On this point it is interesting to note the opinion of Dr. W. S. Rainsford of his recent studies of the African in Africa: "To advance at all," says Dr. Rainsford, speaking of the East African, "he must be firmly, lovingly, *forced to work*, kept at his job, for his own strongest de-

fense against all civilization and religion is the fact that at heart he is a nomad still. . . . For a long time to come the East African must be firmly and wisely made to do what he ought to do. . . . The opponents of forced labor in any form and under any circumstances wax ignorantly eloquent. But outcries do not alter facts. The man who is not fit to be his own master must be put under the mastership of some one else or he will perish from the earth. No savage ever did or ever will in any age or in any land work systematically unless obliged to."

### **Intelligent Supervision**

Fifth, slavery gave the negro an intelligent master, and this above all other things was his greatest need. He had shown himself absolutely incapable of self-mastery; and it is far better for one to have another for a master than to have no master at all.

### **Altruism and Loyalty**

Sixth, slavery developed in the slave to a very remarkable degree the spirit of altruism and the spirit of loyalty to this master. It can hardly be shown that slavery was ever very repulsive to the negro. Of course, he would have accepted freedom gladly at any time, as he will gladly accept any change which he thinks will give him larger opportunities to satisfy his inordinate desire for excitement. But slavery was the best life he knew, and the freedom from care and responsibility which it gave met a responsive



chord in his soul. He took great pride in the system of which he recognized himself as an essential part; and he respected and honored the man that owned slaves and felt great pride in his own master's success. The slave abhorred with the utmost contempt the white man who owned no slaves, and spoke of him in a contemptuous way as "poor white trash." The attitude of the negro slave to slavery and to his master was so radically different from what the attitude of the white man would have been under similar circumstances that it is almost impossible for us to comprehend the feeling of the negro, and we are continuously in danger of misinterpreting the negro altogether by reading into his acts and motives the point of view of the white man. When we understand his peculiar nature and what seems his peculiar attitude to his master, it is not difficult to understand how slavery developed to a very marked degree in the negro altruistic traits and genuine loyalty to his master's family. The loyalty and devotion and unselfish service of the negro to the family of his master during the Civil War have rightly elicited the admiration and praise of the whole world for this down-trodden race. The splendid traits shown by the slave in the time of peril to his master and to his master's family have doubtless been responsible in a very large measure for the exaggeration of the evils of slavery to the negro. A recognition of such traits doubtless intensified the feeling of disgust on the part of many that such a people should have been held in bondage at all by another race. But it is extremely prob-

able that these very commendable traits were almost exclusively the products of slavery. To understand the relation of slavery to the development of these traits in the negro, compare the negro during the Civil War with the negro who has grown up since that time in this particular.

### **Lack of Loyalty Since Civil War**

Would the white women of the South be safe to-day surrounded by the negroes who have grown up under a *régime* of freedom, with their husbands and brothers and fathers away in a distant battle field? They hardly feel safe with their husbands and fathers and brothers at home. What can be said of his loyalty to his employer—even to his recognized benefactor to-day? Is it not true that he is noted for his lack of loyalty and the absence, seemingly, of any real appreciation of gratitude for favors shown him by the white people? One of his most serious defects in the industrial field is the fact that he may leave his work at any time regardless of his obligations to his employer and regardless of the loss that his leaving may bring to his employer. As to unselfish service, the negro of the present day, with some few exceptions, seems to know but little of this virtue. He expects to be paid well for everything he does for a white person, and we can hardly conceive of his rendering valuable, unselfish service to the whites to-day as the negro gave during the Civil War. After years of training under slavery the negro showed himself capable of keeping sacred a great trust committed to his hands by the accident of war; but

after years of training under freedom he gives no satisfactory evidence of any capacity to measure up to such responsibility at the present time.

### **Mastery of Tools**

Seventh, slavery developed the negro in the use of tools, and gave him considerable skill in many instances as a worker. Many slaves were trained as carpenters and blacksmiths and in a number of other skilled occupations, and it is probable that there were more skilled negro mechanics just after the war in proportion to the negro population than to-day.

### **Ethical and Religious Training**

Eighth, the ethical and religious training the negro received under slavery can hardly be exaggerated as an economic factor in his life. He was taught the difference between right and wrong by the white man and the white woman, and the ethical standards of the white man were instilled at home and at the church; for the negro then attended the white church and was taught ethics and religion by the white preacher. His ethical and religious training doubtless had much to do with his efficiency as a worker; for his chief trouble in the industrial world has always been moral deficiencies.

Whatever may be the proper condemnation of slavery as an institution in this country, and whatever may have been the injuries it brought to the South, slavery was an immeasurable blessing to the negro, and did more for his real advancement than all other influences combined. The

negro race should never cease to hold as one of their most priceless possessions the training they received under the *régime* of slavery in the Southern States.

### Dangers of Freedom

The effect of freedom on the negro from the economic point of view is a question on which there is much difference of opinion, and perhaps we are not yet far enough from slavery to be in a position to measure accurately the possibilities of the negro as an economic factor in our modern life. But we must reason on what data we have, and hold our theories subject to change when more light demands a change.

Freedom was not an exchange of outside mastery for self-mastery, as was the assumption of emancipation, but an exchange of outside mastery for no mastery at all in many, many instances. The shock of such a freedom as was conferred on the negro was too great for him to withstand without serious, if not lasting, injury to himself. Freedom destroyed the mastery and control which had come to him through slavery, and he found himself incapable of building up a defense from within that would meet the demands of progress. The training the older slaves had received under slavery was sufficient in many instances to protect them against the dangers of freedom, for it is very true that the child trained up in the way he should go in the industrial field will hardly depart from it when he is old. But it was very different with the younger negroes, and those who were born after emancipation.



These were allowed to follow their own inclinations in large measure, and very rapidly they got away from that regular, systematic life that did so much for their fathers under slavery. Slavery gave splendid training to the individual, but it did not continue long enough to get this character into the fibre of the race. Hence, when the bonds of slavery were broken and the negro was freed from all the restrictions that slavery involved, the tendency was for the younger negroes to revert to the old type. The Anglo-Saxon can survive a long time on the capital he inherited from his ancestors, who have been in training in the school of self-mastery for thousands of years. One, two, three, or a half dozen generations may destroy themselves by the abuse of freedom, and yet when a child comes forth and decides to make something of himself, he can draw on the capital of his ancestors and begin to build up where his immediate progenitors left off. But the negro inherits nothing from his distant ancestors to help him in the struggle for self-mastery and successful competition with a superior race. To the extent that the white man in this country returns to the distant type, to that extent he gains strength in the stubborn virtues, but to the extent that the negro returns to the distant type, he is weakened for the rough and strenuous struggle of our modern industrial life.

### **Negro Weaknesses Moral**

The chief weakness of the negro in his struggle for a place in the modern industrial world that

will guarantee his safety and progress is not alone an intellectual weakness, as is generally believed, but a moral weakness. He lacks the moral stamina of self-mastery, of self-control; he lacks the capacity to sacrifice the present for the future, the capacity that is essential to any adequate economic progress. The restless, roaming disposition of the nomad, and the abnormal desire for sensualistic excitement have taken possession of him again, and as yet he has given little evidence of his capacity to cope successfully with these dangerous enemies of his life.

#### **Difficulties of Educational Policy**

The education we have given him has sometimes done more harm than good in fitting him for the only sphere that holds out any hope to him for the future. Undoubtedly the education of the common schools has done much to lift certain individual negroes and give them a better life, but for the negro, as a whole, the effect of the education he has received is open to question. To the extent that it has educated him away from the pursuit of manual labor, it is believed that it has been injurious. It is the one ambition of the negro's life to get away from manual labor, and many of them hope that education will enable them to do this. It is this wrong ideal, it is believed, that has much to do with his inefficiency as an industrial worker. The industrial field is his only hope for a place of permanence in our modern life; and anything that tends to divert his attention and ambition to other fields does him a real injury; it not only leads him to

failure in other fields but unfits him for a place in which he might succeed.

### **Manual Labor Needed**

Unless the negro's ideals can be changed with reference to manual labor, or some outside compulsion can be brought to bear upon him to hold him to the work that gives him the only opportunity to develop his life, it is very questionable if even industrial training will be of much real service in solving the problem of the negro in this country.

### **Industrial Training**

The effects of industrial training, even under the most favorable conditions, are not altogether encouraging in giving a substantial hope that such education will be successful in turning the negro from professional careers to the pursuit of manual labor. The Tuskegee Institute under the direction of Booker T. Washington is perhaps the best school of the kind ever established for negroes. He has doubtless gathered into his school the very pick of the negro race, for the fact that a negro would send his children to an industrial school rather than a "university" is proof that the students that go to the Tuskegee Institute are far above the average in a comprehension of the true sphere of the negro in this country. But with all this, and with the inspirational effect of the strong personality of the head of this school always pointing them to the industrial field as their best opportunity, the graduates of Tuskegee, true to the negro nature

when left to choose and follow his own career, by a great majority follow other than industrial pursuits when they are graduated.<sup>1</sup> In the catalog of Tuskegee some years ago, giving the occupations of graduates of the school we find the following:

Painters .....	1
Tinners .....	5
Dairymen .....	1
Butchers .....	1
Tailors .....	11
Brickmasons .....	8
Carpenters .....	4
Dressmakers .....	2
Harness makers .....	1
Plasterers .....	1
Shoemakers .....	2
Wheelwrights .....	1
Machinists .....	1
Blacksmiths .....	3
Milliners .....	4
Firemen .....	1
Artisans .....	48
Teachers of trades in industrial schools.	28
Students in industrial schools.....	2

People who work at their trades when not employed at some other principal occupation:

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<sup>1</sup> In another chapter one reason for such a small number of these men entering their trades has been pointed out, in that the demands for them as teachers in industrial and other schools has absorbed fully half of them.—Editor.



Carpenters .....	8
Dressmakers and Seamstresses.....	16
Blacksmiths .....	1
Shoemakers .....	2
Mattress makers .....	1
Wheelwrights .....	1
Plasterers .....	1
Painters .....	1
Printers .....	1
Tailors .....	1

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Total.....33

Other occupations of graduates:

Cashier .....	1
Bookkeeper .....	1
Teachers .....	157
Students .....	31
Pharmacists .....	4
Physicians .....	8
Preachers .....	11
School officials .....	9
Other professions .....	6
Newspaper work .....	2
Civil service .....	6
Farmers .....	9
Trained nurses .....	7
(This includes three who kept house also.)	
Railway laborers .....	1
Steward .....	1
Laundresses .....	1
Miners .....	3
Draymen .....	1
Merchants .....	6

Clerks .....	8
U. S. Army.....	4
Housewives .....	29

It is hardly sufficient to say that the reason so small a number of these graduates of this industrial school actually follow the work for which they were trained is the fact that the professions offer them larger incomes. This is perhaps true in some cases, but the chief motive that prompts the negro to follow a "profession," although he has been thoroughly trained for a trade, it is believed, is his natural disinclination to do manual work, and his inordinate desire "to shine" in society.

#### **Per Cent. of Trained Workers Following Trades**

In a journal issued under the direction of the Negro University of Atlanta we find this statement: "Roughly speaking, it has cost above five millions of dollars to establish the industrial schools and send out a thousand workmen. . . . In one case only six in every hundred artisans trained are following their trades."

#### **Low Morals and Economic Inefficiency**

In the negro journal mentioned above is an article from a negro in Texas. That the negro's chief difficulty in the industrial work is not intellectual but moral is emphasized by this writer. "Many of our young men who do follow the trades are not living up to the full measure of their opportunities. In the first place the employer cannot always depend upon them. They

are just as likely not to come to work at the appointed time as they are to come. It matters not how busy the employer may be or how anxious he is to finish the job our young workman feels that he is under no obligation to see him through. He feels free to take a day off and to go a-fishing or to enjoy himself in some other way. That's his idea of liberty. When the next negro workman comes along and asks for a job the contractor says 'No, we don't want any more negroes.' Then we say that that man is prejudiced. I used to think so too, but I don't think so any more. I have hired some of them myself and I know that unreliability has kept more negroes out of good jobs than incompetency ever did. . . . I do not mean that these general statements apply to all our workmen, but I do say that they will apply to the majority."

### **Negro Driven Out by Competition**

The negro's lack of moral qualities more than his lack of skill and training is causing him to lose out almost everywhere he really comes in competition with the white man. In the cities where the negroes are more and more congregating they are being driven out from every place desired by a white competitor. In the northern cities where white people concede no sphere of work to the negro, but compete with him at every point, it is very difficult for the negro to make a living at all, and this is doubtless one reason we find so much more crime among the negroes of northern cities than among the negroes in the South.

In the South, certain spheres of work were for a long time given to the negro, and in these spheres the white man did not compete with him. But this is changing now, and the white man is more and more competing for this work, once considered as belonging to the negro; and as the white man comes in the negro gives back, not because he is a negro, but because he can't be depended upon to do the work well. The white man is driving him out of the barber's trade and now the Greek boys are rapidly driving the negro out of that business upon which he had an exclusive monopoly for so long, namely, the shoe-shining business. The negro knows how to shine shoes, and there is no objection on the part of the white people to having the negro do this work. But the negro cannot be depended upon to give as good service as the Greek; hence, he must retire, as he is doing, and leave the field.

#### **Intermittent Workers Not Wanted**

Under modern industrial conditions there is no place of importance for the intermittent, unreliable worker. Too much depends on each man being at his post at the right time to take any risks with unreliable labor. Hence, the negro is forced back more and more to that class of work which has not been so highly specialized. But specialization is being carried into almost every field in the city, and the negro must improve or lose out altogether as a factor in the industrial life of the Southern city.

#### **The Negro and the Cotton Industry**

For a long time it was believed that the negro was essential to the successful production of cot-

ton in the South. But this position is no longer tenable. "The President of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College has contributed something towards assisting us in forming an opinion on this matter of efficiency, in a study of conditions in several Mississippi counties. Lowndes County, with three negroes to one white man, having 21,972 blacks and 7,121 whites, requires 3.15 acres to make a bale of cotton, while Jones County, with three whites to one negro, requires 1.98 acres to make a bale. The farm lands of Jones County are valued, as found in the census reports, at \$2.85 per acre, and the farm lands of Lowndes County are valued at \$9.83 per acre. Yet the poor lands of Jones County under intelligent cultivation produced nearly twice as much per acre as the rich lands of Lowndes County when cultivated mostly by negroes. Noxubee County, with more than five blacks to one white, requires 3.50 acres to make a bale of cotton, while Union County, with three whites to one black, requires only 2.56 acres to make a bale. The farm lands of Noxubee County are valued at \$7.12 and the lands of Union are valued at \$4.81. Hinds County, with three negroes to one white man, requires 2.50 acres to make a bale, while Perry County, with more than two whites to one negro, requires only 1.96 acres to make a bale. The farm lands of Hinds are valued at three times as much as are those of Perry. In the counties Leflore, Bolivar, and Washington, where they have about eight negroes to one white man, but almost without exception the negroes are under white managers, they make one bale to every acre and a half, while in Lowndes,

Noxubee and Monroe, where not many white managers are employed, they make on an average about one bale to three acres. While this difference is partly caused by a difference in the fertility of the two groups of three counties, yet the principal difference is due to the superior intelligence used in the management of the first group.”<sup>1</sup>

### Italians Supplanting Negroes

In a recent book on the “American Race Problem,” by Stone, a comparison is given between negro and Italian labor in the cotton fields of Arkansas. Certain cotton planters in this section, purely as a business proposition, employed a number of Italians, together with a number of negroes to work on their plantation. The Italians had come to Arkansas some time before and represented a number of heterogeneous occupations instead of being taken solely from the farming class.

“The number of Italian squads in 1898 (employed on this plantation) was 28, with 200 working hands, cultivating 1,200 acres of cotton. Of negro squads, there were 203, with 600 hands, cultivating 2,600 acres of cotton. At the end of 1905, after eight years, there were on the property 107 Italian squads, with 500 working hands, and 38 negro families with 175 working hands,—an increase of 69 squads and 300 hands for the Italians, a decrease of 165 squads and 425 hands for the negro. The total cotton acreage has increased to 3,900, of which the Italians are cul-

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<sup>1</sup> Stone: “Studies in the American Race Problem.”

tivating 3,000 acres and the negroes 900. This bare statement of numerical loss and gain is of itself pregnant with meaning. It becomes doubly significant when we analyze the operations of the period under investigation. Beyond the number of families, hands and acreage the details for 1898 are not available. As the year's business for 1905 is not yet closed, I shall eliminate it also. This gives us a six year period for a comparative exhibit of the two classes of labor, working literally side by side, their land indiscriminately allotted, each on the same tenure, each under the same conditions of soil, climate and management. This gives us the following results: Average number of squads, Italian, 5, negroes, 167; average number of working hands, Italians, 269, negroes, 433; average number of acres per working hand, Italians, 6.3, negroes, 5.1; average pounds of lint per hand, Italians, 2,584, negroes, 1,174; average pounds of lint per acre, Italians, 403, negroes, 233; average cash product value per hand (cotton and seed) Italians, \$277.36, negroes, \$128.47; average cash product value per acre, Italians, \$44.77, negroes, \$26.36. Thus, the Italian is seen to have produced more lint per hand by 1,410 pounds or 120.1 per cent., and to have exceeded the negroes' yield per acre by 170 pounds, or 72.9 per cent. The difference in money value in favor of the Italian was \$148.89 per hand, or 115.8 per cent., and \$18.41 per acre or 69.8 per cent. It must also be borne in mind that the negro was cultivating a crop with which his race has been familiar for generations, while the Italian had never seen a stalk of cotton before

coming to America only a few years ago. Until shown, they did not even know the difference between the plant they were to save and the weeds they were to cut out in the process of cultivation. To state it bluntly and coldly, it is for the negro a recital of conditions as old as his freedom; too much time spent out of his crop, and away from his work; too much waiting for the weather to improve; too much putting off to a more convenient season; a too constant and too successful besieging of those in authority for money accommodations and supplies; too little reckoning against the future day of settlement; too much "leaning on the Lord," and too little upon himself in things not spiritual; too much living for to-day and not enough for to-morrow."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Negro Must Have Special Preparation for Economic Efficiency**

It is now very clear that the negro is not an essential factor in any single sphere of the life of the South, though as yet we are dependent on him for the mass of our labor, and if he hold his own, or if he hold any place at all in the industrial field of the South, he must prepare himself or be prepared to compete with the white man.

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<sup>1</sup> Stone; "Studies in the American Race Problem."



### III

## HEALTH AND HOUSING OF THE NEGRO

## WE WEAR THE MASK

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh, the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask!

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

### III

## HEALTH AND HOUSING OF THE NEGRO

### **Test of Civilization**

The surest test of a civilization lies not in the accumulated wealth of the people, not in the degree of perfection in political organization, not in its educational advancement, and one is tempted to say not even in its organized church life. All of these are, to be sure, indices of development, but the surest test of any civilization lies in the character of its homes. Any race that has the ability to build up and keep sacred the institution of the family must be counted as a progressive race. The past history of the negro has not been very encouraging in this regard. Neither in Africa nor in America during the days of slavery did he know the true meaning of the word home. It is much to the credit of the negro race that out of such a past he is slowly but surely evolving the institutions of the family and the home.

### **Relation of House to the Home**

In this process of evolution, the house in which he lives plays no small part. It has been often and well said that a palace without love and ideals is not a home, and the glory of the one

room cottage where love reigns has been sung by poets and bards. The plain truth, however, is that one room gives poor opportunity to keep pure and sweet the love that once entered there, and the house has more to do with the home than some poets have dreamed; and surely the house has a most vital relation to the health and, therefore, to the morals and ideals of its inmates. If a nation's progress can be measured by its homes, almost as surely can the state of the homes be measured by the state of the houses in which these homes are made. With the idea of this vital relationship in mind, let us study the question of negro housing.

### **Housing in Slavery Days**

During the days of slavery, the negroes lived in the long rows of log cabins—mostly one roomed—which stretched away from the “big house” like two white wings. These were known as the slave quarters, and, being whitewashed, they not infrequently gave a very picturesque appearance to the old plantation. One who visits these old Southern plantations to-day may find the remnants of the slave quarters still in existence, though they are fast tumbling into decay. In these early days of the South most of the poorer people of the section lived in these one or two roomed log cabins; however, the life **therein** was cheerless and without comforts. Booker T. Washington has given a graphic description of this life in his “Up from Slavery”: “There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain

hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the 'cat-hole,'—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The 'cat-hole' was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the center of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. . . ."

This picture drawn by Washington is much more dreary than the average cabin would justify; for usually there was a board floor and somewhat better doors. Life in slave quarters, however, was poor at the best.

### Country Housing

The housing conditions of the negro farmer have not changed since slavery nearly so much as one would wish, nor as one might reasonably expect. I have traveled through the country in almost every section of the South, and the negro farm houses consist usually of one, two, or three

rooms, poorly furnished, poorly kept, with no pictures, and with the barest necessities for living. Professor DuBois has made some study of a typical slave county — Dougherty County, Georgia. His word about conditions of housing is rather pessimistic but is doubtless not much overdrawn: "The form and disposition of the laborers' cabins throughout the Black Belt is to-day the same as in slavery days. Some live in the self-same cabins, others in cabins rebuilt on the sites of the old. All are sprinkled in little groups over the face of the land, centering about some dilapidated Big House where the head-tenant or agent lives. The general character and arrangement of these dwellings remains on the whole unaltered. There were in the country, outside the corporate town of Albany, about fifteen hundred negro families in 1898. Out of all these, only a single family occupied a house with seven rooms; only fourteen have five rooms or more. The mass live in one- and two-room houses."

"The size and arrangements of the people's homes are no unfair index of their condition. If, then, we inquire more carefully into these negro homes, we find much that is unsatisfactory. All over the face of the land is the one-room cabin—now standing in the shadow of the Big House, now staring at the dusty road, now rising dark and sombre amid the green of the cotton-fields. It is nearly always old and bare, built of rough boards, and neither plastered nor ceiled. Light and ventilation are supplied by the single door and by the square hole in the wall with its wooden shutter. There is no glass,

porch, or ornamentation without. Within is a fireplace, black and smoky, and usually unsteady with age. A bed or two, a table, a wooden chest, and a few chairs compose the furniture; while a stray show-bill or a newspaper makes up the decorations for the walls. Now and then one may find such a cabin kept scrupulously neat, with merry steaming fireplace and hospitable door, but the majority are dirty and dilapidated, smelling of eating and sleeping, poorly ventilated, and anything but homes."

"Above all, the cabins are crowded. We have come to associate crowding with homes in cities almost exclusively. This is primarily because we have so little accurate knowledge of country life. Here in Dougherty county one may find families of eight and ten occupying one or two rooms, and for every ten rooms of house accommodation for the negroes there are twenty-five persons. The worse tenement abominations of New York do not have above twenty-two persons for every ten rooms. Of course, one small, close room in a city, without a yard, is in many respects worse than the larger single country room. In other respects it is better; it has glass windows, a decent chimney, and a trustworthy floor. The single great advantage of the negro peasant is that he may spend most of his life outside his hovel in the open fields."

### City Housing

The conditions of houses in themselves are but little more inviting in the cities. In an investigation of 1,137 negro families made under di-

<sup>1</sup> "Souls of Black Folks," pp. 138-140.

rection of Atlanta University in 1897 it was found that 117 families lived in single-room houses, 276 lived in two-roomed houses, 308 families occupied three rooms each, 197 had four rooms each, 112 had five rooms, 122 had more than five rooms,—and the average number of occupants for all rooms was 2.22 persons. In a study of the Philadelphia negro in 1899 it was found that in the seventh ward alone 829 families, or 35 per cent. of the negro families of the ward, occupied just one room to the family. It is not an uncommon thing for one in passing through the poorer negro section to see a sign, "sleepers wanted," tacked on the front of a two- or three-roomed house occupied by a family of from two to six persons. One house visited had a shed-room, used for a dining-room and kitchen, and two front rooms. In these two front rooms the negro man, his wife, and three grown daughters lived, and they took three "men sleepers" into the house. Another house visited had two rooms—one used for kitchen, dining-room and laundry-room. The wife made the living by taking in washing. In the other room—one without a ray of sunlight—lived this woman, her invalid husband, and two children. In these houses one almost never finds a bath-room and almost as seldom finds a toilet. In the investigation by Atlanta University, of the 1,031 houses visited only 43, or 4 per cent., had bath tubs. It is safe to say that among this class of negroes—the ignorant day-laboring class—this percentage of bath tubs is fully up to the average.



### Unfavorable Location

These negro homes have the additional disadvantage of being located in the lower, damper, and more disagreeable parts of the city. In Atlanta, as an illustration, there are large negro settlements in the lower parts of Houston Street, and in the more undesirable parts of West Atlanta. In Nashville, the lowlands between the central part of the city and the residence section of South Nashville, known as "Black Bottom," is tenanted by negroes. So one could go through the list of almost every Southern city, and the facts are always the same.

Still further, these houses are undesirable, because they are largely located on the alleys rather than the streets. Mr. H. Paul Douglass says: "I know a Charleston alley lined with thirty-two negro tenement houses. In the midst of the alley, its sole source of water supply is an open dipping well, surrounded by a sixteen-inch curb. On this curb all the people of the thirty-two houses do their washing, etc."<sup>1</sup> This means that these homes have absolutely no yard space, that they have a most dreary outlook, that they are surrounded by all sorts of unsightly trash, and that the air is not infrequently laden with foul odors. It would be hard for any people to make homes in such houses. It would be hard to estimate just what would be the deteriorating effect of removing from the homes of our white people every flower, every tree, every blade of grass, and yet that is what has happened for the mass of the negro working-men. Professor DuBois, in his

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Reconstruction in the South," p. 177.

study of the Philadelphia negro, gives the following figures: Of the 1,751 families making returns, 932 had a private yard 12x12 feet, or larger; 312 had a private yard smaller than 12x12 feet; 507 had either no yard or a yard and outhouse in common with the other denizens of the tenement or alley.<sup>1</sup>

Yet again the homes of a large number of negroes are located down in the heart of the city in the old houses long since abandoned by white people, or in those sections of the town where railroads, factories, etc., have made living undesirable.

Lastly, these houses are often old and are kept in poor repair. If it were not for the high rental which they command they would be torn down to give place for better structures.

### **Exorbitant Rentals**

Now the negro not only puts up with these miserable houses and bad locations, but he frequently pays an exorbitant rent. I have asked a good number of landlords why they do not tear away the old negro houses and build decent tenements, and the usual reply is that the present investment brings a larger dividend. Fifteen to twenty per cent. dividends is not thought to be exorbitant from such rentals. In many of the very worst sections of Negrotown in Nashville, rooms rent for two dollars per week. If a woman who is a cook, working for twelve dollars per month, has only one room, she will pay a half to two-thirds of her income for the

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<sup>1</sup> "The Philadelphia Negro," p. 293.

rent of a miserable hovel. In a recent investigation made in the city of Nashville, out of 12,579 females over fifteen years of age, 5,595 were employed as laundresses, cooks, house girls, and child nurses,—the average salary for which services ranged from eight to fifteen dollars per month. Unless these women had other support than that of their own labor, they would have a bare pittance on which to live after paying room rent. There is no wonder they resort to stealing and even worse crimes.

### **Why Negroes Accept These Conditions**

There are two reasons why negroes will continue to live in these unsanitary houses in the worst sections of the city. In the first place, the great majority of negroes are engaged in personal services, such as that of cooks, waiters, and waitresses, butlers, drivers, nurses, etc. This necessitates their being as near their work as possible. In the second place, the strong social nature of the negro calls for constant companionship. He wants to be where he can see many others of his kind. He does not want to be isolated. Where there are many congregated, there can be some constant amusement. The organ grinder, the medicine man, the street preacher—all of these flourish in the thickly populated sections of the negro district, and to miss these things would be not to live. It is for this reason that people living far out in the suburbs of a city find it difficult to keep negro servants, in spite of the fact that good servants' quarters are furnished. Thousands of negroes

thus live in crowded and unsanitary tenement houses on the back alleys of the city rather than live out in the suburbs where they might have fresh air and sunshine, cheaper rent and a yard with a garden.

The barest recital of facts such as these convinces one that the negro does not have a chance. He has had so little and has grown accustomed to so little that there is danger lest he will not ever want any better than he has. To increase his wants, to make him see the blessings of better houses, and more air and sunshine—this is a staggering task.

#### **The Better Class of Houses**

And, yet, we must not pass without giving something of the brighter side of the picture. We are reminded of the 126,329 negro homes free of debt and owned by negroes. We must remember that more and more the negro is occupying whole sections of our cities and is making such sections beautiful and attractive. Recently, I went through that section of Atlanta near Atlanta University where are to be found the homes of the better class of negroes. The streets were clean, the yards were green and well kept, there were plenty of shade trees, and most of the houses had from four to eight rooms. They were well painted and one would hardly have known that it was not a white settlement. Just out by the University, I saw the handsome new residence of the leading negro barber of the city,—a brick edifice costing more than twenty-five thousand dollars. Nor is this an isolated case. There are such negro settle-

ments in Chattanooga, Nashville, and many other cities that I have visited.

### Relation of Health to Housing

In view of what has preceded, one may expect the health of the negro to be below that of the white man. And such is evidently the case. Contrary to the idea of the casual observer, the negro has less of endurance, and his death rate is higher than that of the white man. "The vitality of the negro," says Hoffman,<sup>1</sup> "may well be considered the most important phase of the so-called race problem; for, it is a fact which can, and will, be demonstrated by indisputable evidence, that of all races for which statistics are obtainable, and which enter at all into the consideration of economic problems as factors, the negro shows the least power of resistance in the struggle for life." Mr. Hoffman thinks that this physical weakness of the race presages extermination unless such weakness can be overcome, while others take an opposite view and claim that the birth rate will easily keep in advance of the death rate.

### High Death Rate of Negroes

In Washington, for the year 1890, the vital statistics for white and colored showed a relative number of deaths of 67.07 whites to 141.69 colored; and for the same year the figures for Baltimore stood 67.19 whites to 121.55 colored; or, in other words, the negroes in these two

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<sup>1</sup>"Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro," p. 37. I am greatly indebted to this student of the negro for many of the facts in this chapter.

cities that year were twice as unhealthy as the white people. In the cities of Atlanta, Memphis, Charleston, and Richmond, the death rates for the years 1881-1895 were as follows: Atlanta, 18.5 whites to 34.7 colored; Memphis, 20.6 whites to 31.2 colored; Charleston, 23.2 white to 44 colored; Richmond, 20.7 white to 38 colored. Among these cities the comparative death rate most favorable to the negro was in Memphis, where, for every two white deaths per thousand of population, there were three colored deaths; and the least favorable comparative death rate was in Atlanta, where, for every five white deaths per thousand population, there were nine colored deaths. Without wearying the reader with the statistics, it may be stated that both the white death rate and colored death rate in all these cities decreased greatly between 1881 and 1895, but the decrease of the white death rate was greater than that of the colored, hence at the end of the period the latter still stands about 70 per cent. in advance of the former. It may be said also that the statistics of the last census and such other local statistics as are available up to the present year, seem to indicate that this disparity is probably larger now than it was in 1895. Indeed, a number of students of the question have put the death rate per thousand of each race as two to one in favor of the white man.

### **Causes of Excessive Death Rate**

The chief causes of this excessive death rate among negroes seem to be infant mortality, consumption, scrofula, venereal troubles, and intestinal diseases. It will be noted that all of

these are what may be called constitutional diseases, that is, either the disease or else the weakness which makes the subject an easy prey, may be inherited. Hoffman sums up a number of statistical tables as giving "evidence that environment has less effect on the duration of life than have the factors of race and heredity."

### **Infant Mortality**

The infant mortality among the peoples in America is alarmingly high. Too little attention has been paid in the past to the feeding and care of infants. Among the colored people this mortality is still further marked. As illustrations of this fact, the following statistics for the year 1890 may be cited: New Orleans, 1,290 colored births, 555 of which children died before one year of age, or a death rate of 430.2 per thousand; Charleston, 758 births, 350 of whom died under one year of age, or a rate of 461.7; Richmond, 625 births, 331 deaths, death rate of infants, 529.6 per thousand. In other words, of every two colored children born only one lives to be one year old. This is a death plague almost like that visited upon the children of Egypt by the destroying angel.

### **Neglect of Children**

For this alarming infant mortality there are three chief causes: First, the mother works out and must leave the infant in the care of other children who are too young to give it proper attention. According to statistics quoted before, 44 per cent. of the negro women in Nashville

<sup>1</sup> "Race Traits and Tendencies," p. 51.

over fifteen years of age are employed as laundresses, cooks, housemaids, and child nurses, which means that in most cases they must leave their own children without proper care during the day. It may also be added that the medical care given to negro children is altogether inadequate. Thousands of them die without ever being seen by a physician. Here is a crying need for more trained negro physicians who can, and will, meet this need of humanity. These facts will undoubtedly account for much of this excessive infant mortality. As to the other great causes of high death rate among infants, let a negro speak, lest we shall be charged with unfair judgment.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Immorality and Child Diseases**

"There is one obstacle in the race's reproducing itself that has some connection with venereal diseases and hence I speak of it now. I refer to the enormous amount of still births and infant mortality prevalent everywhere among colored people. For the period of 1893-95, the still and premature births in the city of Nashville were 272 for the white, and 385 for the colored; or, in proportion to the population, two and one-third times as many as there ought to have been. This relative state of affairs obtains in Memphis and Atlanta, and in all the large cities of the South. From the health reports of all our large Southern cities we learn that a considerable amount of our infant mortality is due to inanition, infantile debility, and infantile marasmus. Now, what is the case

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<sup>1</sup> "Social and Physical Conditions of Negroes in Cities," p. 24.



in regard to these diseases? The fact is that they are not diseases at all, but merely the names of symptoms due to enfeebled constitutions and congenital diseases inherited from parents suffering from the effects of sexual immorality and debauchery. Translated into common speech, they are nothing more than infant starvation, infant weakness, and infant wasting away, the cause of which is that the infants' parents before them have not given them a fighting chance for life. According to Hoffman, over 50 per cent. of the negro children born in Richmond, Va., die before they are one year old.

"The number of still and premature births among us is a matter of great alarm, not only because it seriously interferes with the numerical increase of the race, but because it involves the fecundity, the health, and even the moral character of large numbers of our women. The support of the family often falls very heavily upon our poor washerwomen; and since they find it hard to get the husks to feed and the rags to clothe their already large number of little folks, living in one room like stock, rather than add to their burden, they resort to crime. An official on the Nashville Board of Health, who is also proprietor of a drug store, tells me that he is astonished at the number of colored women who apply at his store for drugs with a criminal purpose in view."

### **Prevalence of Consumption**

A second cause of excessive death rate among negroes is consumption. According to the census of 1890, the mortality from consumption per

100,000 of each race in certain typical cities was as follows:<sup>1</sup>

	White.	Colored.
Charleston, S. C.	355.4	686.3
New Orleans, La.	250.3	587.7
Savannah, Ga.	371.1	54.4
Mobile, Ala.	304.1	608.2
Atlanta, Ga.	213.8	483.7
Richmond, Va.	230.5	411.1
Washington, D. C.	245	591.8

It will be seen from this table that the lowest excess for the colored deaths over white from consumption is 74 per cent. in Richmond, and the highest excess is 136 per cent. in the City of New Orleans. Not only is this death rate very much higher, but it seems to be increasing. The figures from the City of Charleston, from 1822 or 1894, will indicate this:<sup>2</sup>

CONSUMPTION IN CHARLESTON, S. C., 1822-1894  
(Death rates per 100,000 of population).

Period.	White.	Colored.
1822-30 .....	457	447
1831-40 .....	331	320
1841-48 .....	268	266
1865-74 .....	198	411
1875-84 .....	255	668
1885-94 .....	189	627

<sup>1</sup> Figures taken from "Race Traits and Tendencies of American Negro," p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Figures copied from "Race Traits and Tendencies of American Negro," p. 70.

Thus, while the consumptive death rate, 1822-30, was about equal for whites and blacks, that of the blacks was nearly three and one-third times as great as that of the whites for the period 1885-1894. It seems quite evident that consumption is very much more prevalent since slavery than during slave days.

### **Predisposition to Consumption**

Hoffman thinks the negro has a predisposition to consumption, the conclusions concerning which he sums up the following words:<sup>1</sup> "The average girth of chest of the negro male of thirty years ago was slightly greater than that of the white, but at the present time the chest expansion of the colored male is less than that of the white. This decrease in the size of the living thorax in part explains the increase in the mortality from consumption and respiratory diseases."

"The capacity of the lungs of the negro is considerably below that of the white. This fact, coupled with the smaller weight of the lungs (4 oz.), is without question another powerful factor in the great mortality from diseases of the lungs." There can be little doubt that one cause of depleted lung power and hence of increased consumption, may be the foul atmosphere in the midst of which so many negroes live.

These facts will only explain the prevalence of the disease and not its increase. The reason for the increase of the disease among negroes may possibly be found in the increase of that other group of diseases, scrofula, syphilis and gon-

<sup>1</sup> "Race Traits and Tendencies," p. 170.

orrhea. These diseases are known to be veritable scourges among the colored population. I have taken pains to question a great many Christian physicians, both white and colored, about the prevalence of gonorrhea among negroes, and most of them put the percentage among the men at ninety-five out of every hundred. Some of the colored physicians have put it higher than that. There can, of course, be no reliable statistics secured on this point, and these are simply opinions which cannot be verified. It is always dangerous to accept opinions as verified facts: but, allowing for all error, the figures must be alarmingly high. Let us turn to the Atlanta University investigation, which was made by negroes, to find their opinion about the increase and deadliness of these diseases among their own race:<sup>1</sup> "For the period 1882-85, the colored death rate in Memphis from scrofula and syphilis was 205.8 per cent. in excess of that among the whites; but from 1891 down to the present time, the excess has been 298 per cent. For the period 1893-95, there were in the City of Nashville 8 white deaths from scrofula and syphilis, and 35 colored. In proportion to the population there ought to have been only 5 colored. Of course, allowance must be made for the fact that, on account of the scandal and disgrace, white physicians are reluctant to report white deaths from these causes; whereas such motives rarely, if ever, influence them in reporting colored deaths."

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<sup>1</sup> "Social and Physical Condition of Negroes in Cities," p. 23.

### Scrofula and Syphilis

"According to the May Bulletin of the Department of Labor, out of 1,090 colored people canvassed this year in the City of Nashville, 18 were suffering from scrofula and syphilis. One whose attention has not been called to the matter has no conception of the prevalence of these diseases among the negroes of Nashville. I have looked for it in both races as I have walked the streets of my city, and to come across the loathsome disease in the colored passers-by is not an uncommon occurrence. This state of affairs can be accounted for when I tell you that there is probably no city in this country where prostitution among colored people is more rampant and brazen, and where abandoned colored women are more numerous or more public in their shameful traffic."

### Inferences

It would seem to be a fair conclusion from these facts that sexual immorality among negroes is so debilitating the mothers and fathers, that a large percentage of the children are born dead, or else they enter the world so starved and diseased that half of them die before they reach the age of one year.

Further, it may be concluded that this sexual immorality is so sapping the vital power of the negro race that they fall an easy prey to diseases such as consumption, and when once such a disease has got hold of their lives they have not the vital power to withstand or check its ravages. And, lastly, one may conclude that the diseases which arise out of sexual immorality are taking

off large numbers of the race to premature graves. Here is a sight loathsome enough to sicken even the stoutest heart. A race of people in our very midst, many of them working in our own homes, and yet dying of a more awful leprosy than one dare describe—a leprosy all the more deadly because it kills not only the body but damns the soul.

### **Housing and Health**

What relationship has the housing question to these questions of health and morals? A very vital one, and yet, perhaps, not just the relation which has been so commonly in mind. It is not fevers alone that arise out of housing conditions, though such conditions may be directly responsible for a large portion of such diseases. Poor housing, back alleys, no ventilation, poor sanitation, no sunshine do much to foster disease of all kinds. In particular they prepare fertile soil for the growth of the tubercular germs. They weaken the body of the inhabitant so that he is not best able to withstand disease. They may so discourage the people who dwell in such surroundings that they do not struggle against the ravages of sickness.

### **Housing and Morals**

But these are not the worst results of the overcrowding and poor housing. By far the worst results on health arise out of the low state of morals they superinduce. So long as people are huddled together in filthy houses and unsanitary surroundings, so long will they be lacking in that pride and self-respect which makes for morality.

A man living on a clean street—all other things being equal—is a more decent and moral man than he would be were he living on a back alley. A man who has had a bath is surely more apt to have clean thoughts than the man who never bathes. The man who wears decent clothes in keeping with his decent surroundings has a better chance to be moral than the man who is filthy in the midst of filthy surroundings. No man who has ever shaved and bathed and donned clean linen can for one moment fail to understand that cleanliness not only is next to godliness, but cleanliness helps to create godliness. We cannot make people moral so long as they live in filth and in squalid surroundings.

Further, people cannot be moral so long as they are herded together like cattle without privacy or decency. If the men and the women, the boys and the girls from half a dozen tenements are forced to use one toilet, we cannot expect either privacy or decency. If a mother, a father, three grown daughters, and men boarders have to sleep in two small rooms, we must expect lack of modesty, promiscuity, illegitimacy and sexual diseases. It would be a miracle if it turned out otherwise. No nation in modern times can live and be moral when its people eat and drink, work and sleep, bring forth children and come to death in one-room cabins. A one-room house, however clean, is not conducive to family morality, and the sooner we realize this and have some measure of sympathy for the weakness of people who live under such conditions, the sooner will we take steps to make conditions of life for the negro such as will be more conducive to morality.



After all, the question of negro health and housing is a moral question. His present mode of life is such as to render it well nigh impossible for him to be moral, and his present immorality makes him an inefficient laborer, an expensive criminal, a distributor of infectious diseases, and a moral plague. We are—whether we like it or not—bound in the matter of self-defense, to see that these conditions are changed. He must have a new sense of personal purity, he must have a new sense of the sacredness of the family relations, he must come to have a new pride in his home. To this end the houses in which he lives must be improved, the streets on which his house stands must be cleaner, and the sanitation in his section of the city must be made equal to that of any other section of the city in which he lives.

### **Common Sense Policy**

It is not maudlin sentiment that dictates such a policy; it is sane commonsense. It is the law of economics which demands strong, healthy and efficient labor; it is the law of self-preservation which knows the danger of social contamination; it is the law of justice which would give to every man, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, white or black, an equal chance to achieve, and that under the fairest conditions; it is these laws and not sentiment that demand the betterment of the negro's condition.

### **Hopeful Signs**

Through the darkness of the present condition there are two rays of light. The first is the



awakening conscience of a respectable minority of the colored race, who are making a heroic fight to preserve their own purity of life, and doing what they can to lift their race out of the mire. All honor to the little band of brave, heroic souls. It is a battle worthy of the best steel. Here and there I have met these moral heroes, and their bold, hopeful courage in the presence of such difficulties is a tonic to the faith of any man. He who would scorn such a fighter or laugh at his failures and mistakes has not the spirit of true chivalry in his heart. Would that we had more men who labored as unselfishly for what they conceive to be the good of their people, as are Washington, DuBois, Gilbert, Hunton, Hope and scores of others less prominent, but no less earnest.

The second ray of light emanates from the awakening responsibility of the white man. As I have traveled from college to college, here and there I have found college men that really cared, men that saw the dire need of these "neighbors in black," and began to stretch out a hand to them. It is not strange—it is what one would expect—that this generation of college men are more interested in these human beings by their sides than any other class of men, and the time will come when every college man will see that his larger culture, his better chance, his broader outlook—all these put him under obligation to help the race that is down.



IV

THE EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO

## UNEXPRESSED

Deep in my heart that aches with the repression,  
And strives with plenitude of bitter pain,  
There lives a thought that clamors for expression,  
And spends its undelivered force in vain.

What boots it that some other may have thought it?  
The right of thoughts' expression is divine;  
The price of pain I pay for it has bought it,  
I care not who lays claim to it—'tis mine!

And yet not mine until it be delivered;  
The manner of its birth shall prove the test.  
Alas, alas, my rock of pride is shivered—  
I beat my brow—the thought still unexpressed.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

## IV

### THE EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO

#### Prejudice Against Education

Aside from the question of social intermingling, perhaps the question of negro education has aroused more prejudice and created more discussion than any other in connection with the race problem. Those who have studied the prevailing opinion among Southern whites must recognize that there is little enthusiasm for the educated negro. As a civilized nation we have long since accepted the maxim that "knowledge is power," and that any nation which keeps its people in ignorance is doomed to mediocrity. But somehow we have not applied this thought to the colored race of America. Perhaps this attitude has arisen out of the fear that education will lead to negro dominance in politics and to promiscuous mingling in social life. The Southern white man will never be enthusiastic for negro education until he is convinced that such education will not lead to either of these. Neither will he become enthusiastic until he finds the trained negro becoming a more efficient workman and a better citizen. The *so-called* educated negro has not always proven himself a better laborer or a better citizen. This, perhaps, is

the fault neither of education nor of the negro—it is the fault of mistaken ideas of what constitutes education. There has been much said about the decrease of illiteracy among negroes from somewhere between 90 per cent. and 100 per cent in 1865, to only 43 per cent. in 1909. This is a marvelous development, and is a long step toward education. To be able to read and write opens up an entirely new world to men. It is as though one opened the eyes of the blind or unstopped the ears of the deaf. But I can easily understand that the discordant noises of the world would break with great harshness on those ears which had always been closed, and the soul with this new gateway of knowledge suddenly opened would be completely bewildered and fail to understand the meaning of all these conflicting noises. So it is with the negro who has just come into possession of the use of these strange symbols that we call an alphabet. He is not at once transformed into a man with a cultured mind; he must be bewildered by much that he reads, having no key to its real understanding. Education for the negro has not been tried, for the little smattering of knowledge which he has may well have bewildered him rather than cleared his thought.

#### **Present Negroes vs. Slave Negroes**

It is not unlikely that the negro is more immoral to-day than he was during slavery days—now that he is all too free. Neither can it be denied that the mass of negroes were better trained workmen during slavery days than now,

even though in slavery days nine out of every ten were illiterate. Not infrequently men have jumped to the conclusion that the cause of the immorality and of the economic inefficiency is education. This, however, is an entirely unwarranted conclusion.

### Unfounded Argument

"These opponents of negro education, with the lack of logic characteristic of the man who draws general conclusions from a few particulars and sees only what is superficially discernible without looking for deeper and more far-reaching causes, ascribe the cause of this difference to the little education that the negro has received. The modern negro has had some sort of education and the old-issue negro had none, therefore they argue education is the cause of the inferiority of the modern negro. They forget that the best of the old negroes were trained in the best industrial schools, on farms and in shops, for the work they were to do in life, under the direction of intelligent masters; that in many instances the intimacy of relations between them and the families of humane masters afforded them an environment, association and example that proved most potent in shaping and strengthening their characters; and that the whole social system of the old *régime* was conducive to training the negroes in obedience, self-restraint and industry. Though these old negroes were ignorant of books, they were, from earliest infancy, trained and educated in many of the essentials of good citizenship and efficient service. The present

generation of negroes have been given a mere smattering of the unessentials of knowledge, and left untrained in those other things so essential to life and happiness and progress. The new generation, without preparation, were ushered into freedom and have been left to follow largely their own will without direction or restraint, save that of the criminal law, without elevating associations, without leaders or teachers, save a few rare exceptions."

### **Need of Practical Demonstration**

"We cannot answer effectively this prejudice against negro education, arising from the results produced by causes largely attributable, perhaps, to revolutionized social, political and industrial conditions wrought by the tornado of civil war, save with a practical demonstration of the better results of a better education. All the evils of a reconstruction of society, life and government upon a weak race unprepared for such changes, ushered into the new order of things with but few intelligent, wise, right-thinking leaders, without power of proper self-restraint or self-direction, have been laid by the demagogues, by the unthinking, and by some other men and women as honest and patriotic as any that breathe, at the door of partial education as the quickest, easiest and most plausible solution of the unsatisfactory results. Too few stop to think what might have been the result if the new generation of negroes had been allowed to grow up in absolute ignorance under these changed conditions, with the rights and freedom of citizens of a republic, without the restraint of the training and the



association of educated masters, as under the old system. Too few stop to think that whatever of deterioration there may have been in the new generation of negroes, as compared with the old, may be more attributable to a change in civilization and in the whole order of things than to the little learning that he has received. Too few stop to think of the danger and the unfairness of the sort of reasoning that compares the best of the old generation of negroes with the worst of the new, that compares the partly educated negro of the present generation with the illiterate negro of the old generation, who, though ignorant of books, had much knowledge of many useful industries and trades and better opportunities of acquiring such knowledge; instead of comparing the literate negro of the new generation with the illiterate negro of the new generation, that ascribes all the faults found in the new generation to the smattering of learning that they have received and all the virtues found in the old generation to their illiteracy. One is partly educated, the other was illiterate; therefore education is the cause of the faults of the one and illiteracy of the virtues of the other. The absurdity of such logic ought to be manifest to the average man. Here are two men, one educated, the other ignorant. One becomes a murderer, for there have been educated murderers in all times; the other becomes a good citizen, for there have been ignorant good citizens in all times; therefore education makes murderers and ignorance makes good citizens.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Report of North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction. 1906-7; 1907-8, pp. 44, 45.

### **Reconstruction and Prejudice Against Education**

Another cause for prejudice against negro education arises out of its checkered career during reconstruction days. At that particular time the relationship between the Northern white and the Southern white man was greatly strained. The North suspected the South of keeping the negro in ignorance in order that he might be exploited; and the South suspected the North of trying to educate the negro in order that he might have political dominion and sooner or later lay claim to so-called social equality. Both sides were in a measure right and it is certain now that both were in a measure wrong. It is usually an unsafe thing to condemn wholesale the motives and the judgment of the people of a whole section, whether North or South. Nevertheless, in the passion of the times, many mistakes were made by the missionaries who came South, which completely alienated the Southern whites, and it is only within the last decade that this gulf has been at all adequately bridged. Even now there are not a few sincere Southern men who confuse negro education with doctrines of social intermingling. It is now time we were forgetting this feeling and facing like men the question of negro education on its merits, without reference to the mistakes of the past, save in so far as they may serve as warnings for the present.

### **Education in Slave Days**

The history of negro education before the Civil War is very checkered and also very

meager. It was not thought wise to educate the slaves lest they might become restive, hence one State after another, both North and South, put laws on their statute books forbidding the teaching of negroes. In 1740 South Carolina passed a law with the following provisions:

"Whereas, the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with inconvenience be it enacted, That all and any person or persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach, or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, or shall use or employ any slave as scribe in any manner of writing whatever, hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall for every such offense forfeit the sum of 100 pounds current money."<sup>1</sup>

In 1831 Virginia followed suit with the following law:

"That all meetings of free negroes or mulattoes at any school house, church, meeting-house or other place for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or night, under whatsoever pretext, shall be deemed an unlawful assembly. . . . If any white person or persons assemble with free negroes or mulattoes at any school house, church, meeting-house, or other place for the purpose of instructing such free negroes or mulattoes to read or write, such person or persons shall, on conviction thereof, be fined a sum not exceeding \$50, and, moreover, may be imprisoned, at the discretion of a jury, not exceeding two months."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Race Adjustment."—Miller. p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 252.

In 1829 Georgia put on her statute books a law which reads as follows:

"If any slave, negro, or free person of color, or any white person, shall teach any other slave, negro, or free person of color to read or write, either written or printed characters, the said free person of color or slave shall be punished by fine and whipping, or fine or whipping, at the discretion of the court; and if a white person so offend he, she, or they shall be punished with a fine not exceeding \$500 and imprisonment in the common jail, at the discretion of the court."<sup>1</sup>

Mississippi, North Carolina, Kentucky and Louisiana in establishing their systems of public education between 1830 and 1840 all discriminated against the colored race.

In spite of these facts, however, there were a number of schools in existence before 1860 for the training of the children of freedmen. It is estimated that in the slave States at the opening of the war there were no less than 4,000 free colored children in school.

#### **Freedman's Bureau**

The second period of negro education extends from 1860 to 1875. This is the period of the army schools, the Freedman's Bureau, and of Northern domination. The "army schools," as they were called, were made up of those negroes who fled to the Federal armies and were organized into schools. When the Freedman's Bureau opened work in 1866, these schools had in attendance nearly one hundred thousand. When Gen-

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<sup>1</sup> "Race Adjustment."—Miller, p. 248.

eral O. O. Howard was put in charge of the Freedman's Bureau he took over these schools, gave them a better organization, doubled their attendance, and brought in a large number of the best young women of the North as teachers. That these schools did not do all that could be expected was surely not due to the lack of unselfishness on the part of these teachers.

### **Period of Industrialism**

About 1870 the Southern States began establishing schools for negroes, and by 1875 a constructive policy was in the making. With the establishment of Hampton Institute a new type of education came into vogue, which has greatly influenced all subsequent educational methods. The third period of negro education, therefore, has been marked by a decided tendency toward industrialism. This tendency has been constantly accentuated as the industrial awakening of the South has been more and more pronounced.

### **A Dual System of Schools**

It was during this period that the South came to realize the stupendous task that lay before her in educating two races in separate school systems, and yet with heroism the men of this section have set their faces forward and they will not turn back. This dual system has been expensive in a country so sparsely settled as the South, and it is but natural that it should have meant poorer schools, shorter terms and more meager salaries. Nevertheless it has been a necessity. In many of the counties of the South there are two, three or

even ten negroes to every white man, and to mix the schools in these sections would be to reduce the more advanced race to the station of the less advanced.

This would be an expensive process both for the white and the colored race. If the colored race is to find its largest progress, it must be through the inspiration and help of the more cultured race, and that race to give its best, needs to have opportunity to develop its children under the most favorable conditions. Not only so, but the negro has gained in that he has had a chance to furnish the teachers and leaders for his own race. This has set a goal of ambition for the negro youth, and has meant much to engender a real race pride. Had the races been educated together, the schools would have had white teachers, and the negro would have lost this advantage. Under the heavy burden of a double school system the South has moved steadily and bravely forward.

### **Elementary Education Needed**

Three types of education are needed for the negro of the South. The first is that of the elementary public school. This the South has deliberately set out to furnish. According to the Report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1909, there were in the former slave States 3,054,888 negro children between the ages of five and eighteen. Of this number 1,659,217, or about 54 per cent., were enrolled in the common schools of these States. Including the numbers in two or three of the border States,

there were 3,114 male teachers and 5,886 female teachers in charge of these children. All of the Southern States do not keep separate records of expenditures for the education of the two races, so no exact amount can be given. North Carolina does keep such a record. This State had 231,801 colored children of school age in 1908, as compared with 483,915 white children. For the colored children the State spent on common schools \$366,734.28, as compared with \$1,851,376.57 for white children. In other words, for less than half the number of children about one-fifth of the amount spent for whites was spent on colored schools. The expenditure per colored child was \$1.58, that for each white child of school age, \$3.82. If this same proportion holds for the other former slave States, the total expenditure for negro common schools for 1907-8 would be \$12,487.079. Of course, one cannot be sure that this is even an approximately close estimate. The total amount of money spent in the common schools of these former slave States since 1870 is \$979,831,485. If one-fifth of this has been spent on negro schools—which is probably too large an estimate—the amount would be \$195,966,097. This would be really an enormous sum spent by the white people of the South on the education of the negro, particularly when we consider the poverty which has prevailed in this section up to within the last few years.

### **The Negro's Share**

Of this amount the negro is beginning to pay a fair proportion. Thus, in 1908, in North Car-

olina, the negroes paid in taxes \$147,949 toward the \$366,734.28 spent on their schools. In this connection it must be noted that \$1.58 is a very paltry sum to spend on the education of a child each year. At this rate between the ages of five and eighteen, the State would spend on every child \$20.12. But New York and Massachusetts each spend \$27 yearly on every child of school age, and the District of Columbia spends \$35.21, and yet North Carolina's school tax is heavier than that of Massachusetts. While the South, therefore, is making a heroic effort to give the common school to the negro, the results are nothing less than pitiable. As the wealth of the section grows, there must be heavier school taxes if we are to do our duty by these backward people.

### Limitations

The outcome of these meager appropriations can readily be seen in the length of term and salary of teachers. The average length of term for rural colored schools in North Carolina in 1908 was 82.1 days, and the average length for all colored schools, including city high schools, was only 93 days. The average monthly salary of rural colored teachers this same year was \$22.48, and for city colored teachers it was \$30.20. There are still 195 log school houses for colored children in the State, and 2,216 of the negro school houses are still furnished with home-made desks and benches. I have before me the reports from almost every Southern State and the figures are often much lower. Thus, in



Georgia, the average length of term for white children is 59 days, and for colored children 40 days. The salaries paid, however, are somewhat higher, being \$37.65 per month for negro men, and \$27.22 per month for negro women. In most of the States only about 50 per cent. of the negro children attend school, and then the school houses are overcrowded. In some of our Southern cities I am told there are three children for every seat in a colored school house if they all should really attend. These statements are surely enough to show a great need for better educational equipment. Of the need for better teachers we will speak later.

### Contribution of Public Schools

The contribution which the negro common school makes to the civilizing and elevating of the negro, Mr. Edgar Gardner Murphy puts in the four following statements:

1. "It represents the discipline of punctuality. When the untutored child first gets into his mind the notion of going to a particular place and of doing a particular thing at a particular time, he has begun to get into line with conscious, intelligent, efficient human life. In other words, he has got hold of one of the rudimentary assumptions of civilization."

2. "It stands also for the discipline of order. The child finds not only that there is a time to come and a time to go, but that there is a place to sit and a place not to sit. He finds that there is a place for everything, that everything has its place, and that even standing and sitting, as well

as the whole task of behaving, are to be performed under the control and direction of another.

3. "The primary school stands also for the discipline of silence. For a group of chattering children—negro children, any children—there is a moral value in the discipline of silence. To learn how to keep still, to learn the lesson of self-containment and self-command, to get hold of the power of that personal calm which is half modesty and half courage, to learn a little of the meaning of quiet and something of the secret of listening—this is an element in that supremacy of will which is the faculty and privilege of the civilized.

4. "Finally, the primary school stands for the discipline of association. It represents the idea of getting together. Getting together is a civilizing exercise. Ten people, old or young, cannot get together in a common room for a common purpose without every one's yielding something for the sake of others—some whim, some impulse of restlessness, some specific convenience, or some personal comfort. Human society is a moral achievement. Associated effort, however slight the sphere of its exercise, represents part of the discipline of civilization."<sup>1</sup>

### **Industrial Schools Needed**

The second type of school needed for the negro is that which gives industrial training. In fact every common school should have some industrial features. One of the charges brought against

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<sup>1</sup> "The Present South."—Murphy. p. 73.

the public schools, both for whites and blacks, is that they train children away from the practical interests of life. This practical side may easily be exaggerated, and our schools drift into simple bread and butter machines, without any of the cultural value which should pertain to any education; nevertheless, there is need that we shall guard against a too theoretical system of education.

There is peculiar need to guard this point with the negro child since his new freedom has begotten a disposition to despise all labor. He must be taught that labor is sacred and that honest toil never degrades. If he is to have this attitude toward labor, he must be taught to use skill in his work, to take pride in his ability to do it better than others could do it. Possibly no section of the country is so greatly in need of skilled industrial laborers to-day as is the South. The marvelous growth of the cotton mills during the last two decades is the wonder of the manufacturing world. The new demands for intensive farming make it imperative that we shall have better trained agriculturists. The development of building industries calls for thousands of skilled carpenters, masons, bricklayers, plumbers, painters, etc. Much of this work must be done by colored men. If they are not well trained, our farms will produce one-half or one-third of what they ought to produce, our houses will be poorly built, and every industrial interest of our country will languish. Booker T. Washington has characterized industrial education as having these functions: (1) "To teach the dignity of labor";

(2) "To teach the trades thoroughly and effectively"; (3) "To supply the demand for trained industrial leaders."<sup>1</sup>

### South an Agricultural Section

The South is still largely an agricultural section. This is peculiarly true of the colored South. In spite of the rapid drift of the negro to the city, probably 80 per cent. of the colored laborers are on the farms. This means they must have some special training in agriculture. They must learn how to make two blades of grass grow where formerly only one grew. If this is to come about, every negro leader must have a deeper sympathy for this industrial life. Booker T. Washington puts it thus strongly:

"I do not want to startle you when I say it, but I should like to see during the next fifty years every colored minister and teacher, whose work lies outside the large cities, armed with a thorough knowledge of theoretical and practical agriculture, in connection with his theological and academic training. This, I believe, should be so because the race is an agricultural one, and because my hope is that it will remain such. Upon this foundation almost every race in history has got its start. With cheap lands, a beautiful climate and a rich soil, we can lay the foundation of a great and powerful race. The question that confronts us is whether we will take advantage of this opportunity?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Working with Hands," p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> "Character Building," p. 262.

### Public Schools Not Industrial Schools

Now the negro common or public school has not been able, up to the present time, to meet this need, because of small means. Superintendent Joyner puts it thus: "When we are appropriating only \$366,734.28 for the education of 231,801 negro children, we need not be entertaining many hopes of giving the negro much helpful industrial training yet, for everybody ought to know that this amount is not sufficient to give this number of children thorough instruction in the mere rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, so essential to civilized living and intelligent service in the humblest callings of life."<sup>1</sup>

### Jeanes Foundation

In order to meet this pressing need for agricultural and industrial training, Miss Anna T. Jeanes has set aside a fund of \$1,000,000, the interest on which is to be applied in aiding rural schools. Prof. James H. Dillard, formerly Dean of the Academic Department of Tulane University, is the president and general agent for the Jeanes Foundation. The methods of work of this Foundation can be gathered from Professor Dillard's report on the work done in Henrico County, Va., during the year 1908-9:

"We supplied the county superintendent with the salary for a competent teacher, whose duty it should be to introduce industrial work into the twenty-two colored rural schools of the county, and to supervise the work. This teacher, Miss

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<sup>1</sup> "Report of Superintendent of Public Schools of North Carolina." 1907-8, p. 43.

Virginia E. Randolph, began work on October 26, 1908, and the schools closed June 1. She has spent her whole time in visiting these schools, sometimes two or three a day, so that the schools have had the benefit, not only of the industrial training, but of constant supervision, suggestion and encouragement. It has also been a part of her work to form in the various communities, organizations for school and home improvement.

Miss Randolph writes me that the work of the schools is now on exhibition at the Henrico County Court House, and that the members of the Henrico board are agreeably surprised. I can state from letters received that the work is very heartily approved by the county superintendent.

"There are very many counties in which it would be impossible at present to carry out this plan. Whether from lack of schools, or the wide separation of those that exist, or the shortness of term, or the incompetence of the teachers, the plan would not yet be feasible. I find, however, that it will be possible in many places to adopt a modification of the plan; that is, we can supply the salary for a teacher at the most favorable point in the county, have this teacher give three or four days' work to this school, and let her give the rest of her time to two, three or four neighboring schools, with the intention of influencing these schools and communities in the same manner as has been done in Henrico County."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Report of United States Commissioner of Education." 1909. Vol. I, pp. 235-6.

### Other Form of Help

During the first year of the work of this Foundation, ending July, 1909, \$15,059 was thus spent in teachers' salaries, supplementing the common school with special industrial instruction. It is much to be regretted that the fund is not much larger in order that this work might be greatly multiplied.

### Training Leaders

To supply the leaders in this industrial education the country has to look to such schools as Hampton Institute in Virginia, and Tuskegee in Alabama. We are scarcely aware of the debt of gratitude we owe to these two schools and to those newer ones that are trying to embody their ideals. The ideal of these schools is to make men efficient, to teach them the dignity of labor, to inculcate the ideal of service, and to make real to every student his duties to God and man. Some people have found fault with Tuskegee because it has not trained servants for our homes. It has done a much more important thing. It has sent out hundreds of graduates who have become the foremost leaders of their race—training them to be industrious, to work regularly and to work efficiently. It is a better thing for a girl that graduates from Tuskegee to spend her energies teaching other women how to cook and sew well than to spend her time in one white man's kitchen. Ultimately we reap the benefit in the form of a better trained laboring class. Booker T. Washington has so admirably described the purposes of this type of school in his

introductory chapter to "Working with Hands," that I could wish that every Southern man would read it carefully.

### **Special Training Needed**

The third type of negro education needed is what we may call collegiate training. Against this type of education there has been much opposition and prejudice. I suppose there is no doubt that it has at times been over emphasized and that students poorly qualified have been allowed to enter such courses. The negro, however has no monopoly of this false policy in the South, where there are white colleges that take men from the plow handles and teach them everything from their letters "plumb through" to the final touches of classic lore in the remarkably short time of four years. That there have been mistakes made in negro education cannot be doubted. The question for us to consider, however, is what are the needs of a rightly directed collegiate training for negroes. It seems to me there are three classes of men that must have advanced training; these are the ministers, the teachers and the professional class, including physicians and dentists.

### **Policy of Self Help**

It is a well established policy of all missionary work to put the burden of responsibility on the natives just as rapidly as representative leaders can be trained for these tasks. The same policy has been followed in the South with regard to the negro. We have turned over to the negro



preacher the development of the religious and moral life of his race; to the teacher the development of its intellectual life; and as rapidly as possible we are turning over to their physicians and dentists the care of the physical well-being of the negro. This is just as it should be, but the questions of supreme importance both to the colored man and to the white man are: Are these leaders competent to do their work? Are they sufficiently educated to have broad sympathies and clear judgment? Can they be trusted in times of crises to lead their people aright? These are questions of tremendous import. In the answer to them much of the well-being and peace of the South depends.

### **Trained Ministers Needed**

As we shall see in a later chapter the negro minister is all too frequently ignorant, prejudiced, emotional, and even immoral. Education does not always change a man's morals, and yet it may be said to the credit of the negro educated ministers, that they stand head and shoulders above the general mass in morals and in fair mindedness. No negro minister can be a good leader of his people who does not know the moving of God in history. He must have thorough training in the Bible. He must have some acquaintance with the laws of human life. In short, the negro minister must have much of the same kind of training that our white ministers need, with the exception, perhaps, of the languages. Be it said to the credit of most of the negro colleges they put more stress on English, history and

economics than on the more impractical branches. I confess I am disappointed that some of the catalogues seem to indicate an overfondness for Latin and Greek. This, however, will be righted when the Southern white man gives sufficient study to this whole question to be able to give sane counsel.

### **Physicians and Dentists Needed**

In another chapter we have referred to the need of better medical attention among negroes. This can be had only through a well trained medical and dental fraternity of the negro race. For this purpose we must have well equipped and well endowed medical and dental colleges.

### **Trained Teachers Needed**

Lastly, we must have better trained negro teachers. According to the State School Commissioner of Georgia, the number of negro teachers in that State holding normal certificates in 1908 was only 326. Only 129 held first grade certificates, 476 held second grade certificates, while the vast majority, 2,037, held third grade certificates. When one remembers the exceedingly low requirements for a third grade certificate, it is no wonder that negro education is so inefficient, and apparently shows such poor results.

### **Broad Culture Needed**

It is coming to be a maxim of good education that the elementary teacher needs as broad culture and as thorough training as the teacher in

higher branches. Otherwise the teaching in the lower grades becomes simply a process of questions and answers, according to the letter of the text book. In order that there may be a more thorough uplift of the negro child there must be a better training of the negro teacher.

### **Schools of Advanced Standing**

Now of all the schools that are attempting to do work of high school grade and upward, not counting public schools, including all the industrial schools, such as Tuskegee, there are in the former slave States, plus those in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Oklahoma, just 135 institutions, according to the report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1909. These schools enroll 9,775 boys and 13,734 girls of elementary grades, 7,751 boys and 9,258 girls of secondary grade, and 2,885 men and 1,300 women of collegiate grade.<sup>1</sup>

### **Leaders in Training**

In other words, there were in process of training for leadership in the ministry, teaching and the professions only 2,885 men in the year 1909. This little handful of men—not so many as the number of colored teachers in the single State of Georgia—are to be the leaders of 9,000,000 colored people. Surely this is not an overcrowding in the realm of trained leadership.

### **Work for 33 Colleges and their Graduates**

Professor DuBois, in the report of the Atlanta University Conference for 1902, tabulates thirty-

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<sup>1</sup> "Report of U. S. Commissioner of Education," 1909.

three colleges that he thinks should really bear that title. From these colleges up to 1899 there have been graduated 2,008 negroes. From the Northern universities there have been graduated several hundred more (400?), so that from all sources Professor DuBois estimates there are probably 2,500 negro graduates in America. Of this number probably 80 per cent. are at work in the South. In order to find out what these college graduates do an investigation was undertaken by Atlanta University. Letters were written to all the 2,500 college-bred negroes who could be located, asking their occupation, etc. 1,312 sent replies. Of this number 701 or 53 per cent. were teachers, 221 or 17 per cent. were preachers, 83 or 6.3 per cent. were physicians, 53 or 4 per cent. were in Civil Service work, and the remainder were in business, farming, secretarial positions, etc.<sup>1</sup> Of the efficiency of these graduates and of the moral worth, Booker T. Washington writes: "Not a single graduate of the Hampton Institute or of the Tuskegee Institute can be found to-day in any jail or State penitentiary. After making careful inquiry, I cannot find a half-dozen cases of a man or a woman who has completed a full course of education in any of our reputable institutions like Hampton, Tuskegee, Fisk or Atlanta who are in prisons. The records of the South show that 90 per cent. of the colored people in prisons are without knowledge of trades, and 61 per cent. are illiterate."<sup>2</sup>

This is surely a splendid showing, and should

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<sup>1</sup> Atlanta University Publication, No. 5, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> "Working with Hands," p. 235.

put our minds at ease on this much-mooted question of the higher education of the negro.

### **Recommendations of Southern Educational Association**

That the education of the negro is not a failure is well indicated by the resolutions adopted by the Southern Educational Association at its meeting in 1907:

"We endorse the accepted policy of the States of the South in providing educational facilities for the youth of the negro race, believing that whatever the ultimate solution of this grievous problem may be, education must be an important factor in that solution."

"We believe that the education of the negro in the elementary branches of education should be made thorough, and should include specific instruction in hygiene and home sanitation, for the better protection of both races."

"We believe that in the secondary education of negro youth, emphasis should be placed upon agriculture and the industrial occupations, including nurse training, domestic science, and home economics."

"We believe that for practical, economical and psychological reasons negro teachers should be provided for negro schools."

"We advise instruction in normal schools and normal institutions by white teachers, whenever possible, and closer supervision of courses of study and methods of teaching in negro normal schools by the State Department of Education."

"We recommend that in urban and rural negro schools there should be closer and more thorough

supervision, not only by city and county superintendents, but also by directors of music, drawing, manual training, and other special topics."

"We urge upon school authorities everywhere the importance of adequate buildings, comfortable seating, and sanitary accommodations for negro youth."

"We deplore the isolation of many negro schools, established through motives of philanthropy, from the life and the sympathies of the communities in which they are located. We recommend the supervision of all such schools by the State, and urge that their work and their methods be adjusted to the civilization in which they exist, in order that the maximum good of the race and of the community may be thereby attained."

"On account of economics and psychological difference in the two races, we believe that there should be a difference in courses of study and methods of teaching, and that there should be such an adjustment of school curricula as shall meet the evident needs of negro youth."

"We insist upon such an equitable distribution of the school funds that all the youth of the negro race shall have at least an opportunity to receive the elementary education provided by the State, and in the administration of State laws, and in the execution of this educational policy, we urge patience, tolerance and justice."

### **Education vs. Ignorance**

It has never been found in all the world that a sane and thorough intellectual equipment has

been detrimental to morals or to industrial efficiency. The negro is no exception to this rule. It is not the educated negro that fills our penitentiary and jails, works in our chain gangs and fills our poor-houses. These places are given over to the ignorant and depraved. It is not the educated negro that makes up our idle and vagrant class, that commits our murders and despoils our women. Here, again, it is the illiterate and degraded negro. The trained negro lives in a better home, wears better clothes, eats better food, does more efficient work, creates more wealth, rears his children more decently, makes a more decent citizen, and in times of race friction is always to be found on the side of law and order. These things seem to be worthy fruits, and whatever system produces them should have our approval. If we are to be fair to ourselves, fair to the section in which we live, and fair to the negro race, we must see that a common school education is provided for all, that industrial training is given to the majority, and that a more thorough and complete training shall be given to the capable few who are to become the leaders of this race.





V

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE NEGRO

## RELIGION

I am no priest of crooks nor creeds,  
For human wants and human needs  
Are more to me than prophets' deeds;  
And human tears and human cares  
Affect me more than human prayers.

Go, cease your wail, lugubrious saint!  
You fret high Heaven with your plaint.  
Is this the "Christian's joy" you paint?  
Is this the Christian's boasted bliss?  
Avails your faith no more than this?

Take up your arms, come out with me,  
Let Heav'n alone; humanity  
Needs more and Heaven less from thee.  
With pity for mankind look 'round;  
Help them to rise—and Heaven is found.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

## V

# THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE NEGRO

### Religious Index

One index of the life of a people is its religion. Find the context of that term and you have found the key to the civilization or the savagery of a people, the key to its progress or its stagnation. Not only the content of a religion but the attitude of a people toward that religion are topics of supreme importance in a discussion such as this.

### What is Religion

Professor Rhys-Davids contends that religion includes three conceptions, "first, beliefs as to internal and external mysteries (souls and gods) —second, the mental attitudes induced by these beliefs, thirdly, the actions and conduct dependent upon both."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Jevons would define religion as "man's consciousness of a supernatural spirit (or spirits) having affinity with his own spirit and having power over him."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tiele says: "The origin of religion consists in the fact that man *has* the Infinite within him even before he is himself

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<sup>1</sup> "Buddhism: American Lectures," p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the "History of Religion," p. 15.

conscious of it, and whether he recognizes it or not."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps we may define religion as man's consciousness of a higher but kindred being with whom he desires and ought to live on terms of truest fellowship. If such be in any sense a true definition of religion, it will be readily seen that such consciousness must have deep meaning for every nation as well as for every individual.

### Negro Ancestry

In order that we may understand the religion of the present negro, we must take a look at his religious life in his fatherland. According to Mr. Dowd<sup>2</sup> the races of Africa fall under five divisions. First, the Negritos, dwelling in the lowlands of the central equatorial region; second, the Negritians, occupying the territory of the Sudan; third, the Fellatahs, scattered among the Negritians of Central Sudan; fourth, the Bantus, occupying almost all the Western portion of the continent, south of the fourth degree of north latitude; and fifth, the Gallas, occupying the southeastern portion of Africa. It was from the fourth division, the Bantus, that most of the slaves were brought to America, and it is among these same tribes that the atrocities of the rubber and ivory trade have recently been perpetrated.

### God's Self-Revelation

It is generally agreed now by anthropologists, I believe, that there are no races, however rude,

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<sup>1</sup> "Elements of the Science of Religion," Vol. 2, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> "The Negro Races," p. 11.

that are destitute of all idea of religion.<sup>1</sup> It is further agreed, I believe, by most Christian thinkers that God has always been trying and still is trying to make Himself known to all men. That this revelation is not equally clear and without admixture for all men need not cause surprise, for the content of a message is not determined alone by the speaker, but by the varying capacities and degrees of attention on the part of the listeners. That the Bantu tribes have some conception of God—however crude it may seem—is not doubted by those that have worked among them longest and known them best.

“Standing in the village street, surrounded by a company whom their chief has graciously summoned at my request, I do not need to begin by telling them that there is a God. Looking on that motley assembly of villagers—the bold, gaunt cannibal with his armament of gun, spear, and dagger; the artisan with rude adz in hand, or hands soiled at the antique bellows of the village smithy; women who have hastened from their kitchen fire with hands white with the manioc dough or still grasping the partly scaled fish—I have yet to be asked, ‘Who is God?’ ”<sup>2</sup>

“The belief in one great Supreme Being is universal. Nor is this idea held imperfectly or obscurely developed in their minds. The impression is so deeply engraved upon their moral and mental nature that any system of Atheism strikes

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<sup>1</sup> Jevons’ “Introduction to the History of Religion,” p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> “Fetichism in West Africa,” Nassau, p. 36.

them as too absurd and preposterous to require a denial."<sup>1</sup>

### Debased Conception of God

But, of course, this conception of God is much debased and mixed with many superstitions. They do not think of God as a father who loves and cares for his children, but as a vague being responsible for man's existence, but caring little for man's destiny. "The prevailing notion seems to be that God, after having made the world and filled it with inhabitants, retired to some remote corner of the universe, and has allowed the affairs of the world to come under the control of evil spirits; and hence the only religious worship that is ever performed is directed to these spirits, the object of which is to court their favor, or ward off the evil effects of their displeasure."<sup>2</sup>

### Spirits

The spirits are of three classes as to origin. First, those existing from eternity—those conterminous with the Supreme being—Paia-Njambi; second, those created by the Supreme Being; third, the souls of dead human beings. These spirits fill the air and inhabit the rocks, the caverns, the trees and even take up their abode in wild animals. Graveyards are their favorite abiding places, hence every native stands in fear of such grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson's "Western Africa," p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 39.

### Origin of Belief in Spirits

The original conception of spirits probably arose from two sources. First, all savages believe that not only plants and animals have spirits but also inanimate things. Whatever moves has life—has a spirit. The stream as it runs and sings, the lightning as it flashes or strikes, the flame as it flickers or consumes the wood are all supposed to be alive. Not only so, but the rock against which man falls and it cuts him, the tree which seems to spring of itself out of the ground, and numerous other objects have life within them. Thus animism—the imputing of spirits to objects of nature—has its rise, and from this it is a short step to the fear and worship of spirits.

Secondly, the idea of spirits arises from man's experiences in dreams. These experiences to the savage are as real as any waking experience. While he sleeps his spirit wanders—it meets the spirits of friends and they recognize each other; when he wakes he is perfectly sure that he has seen and talked with his friend. But he is told that his body has been in his bed—well, then, his spirit has been journeying at will. When he wakes—this is just the return of his spirit to his body. Hence death is simply a continued sleep, where the spirit refuses to return to its body. When a man dies, therefore, his spirit is set wandering, having power to help or harm where it pleases. His spirit may take up its abode in an animal and return to vex the life of his enemies or even his own family. Dr. Nassau tells us of a native who refused to kill an ele-

phant that was ravaging his crop, because he thought his dead father's spirit had taken up its abode in that particular animal.

### **Character of Spirits**

The character of these disembodied spirits is the same as the characters of the living men. They are benevolent or malevolent, full of kindness or full of hatred, in accordance with their former existence. If they have been slighted while in their embodied form, they may come back to take revenge on their enemies. The fact that these spirits have not the encumbrance of a body may make them ten times more powerful than any living man, and the further fact that they can act without detection throws about the life of the native African a constant dread and fear which is almost paralyzing.

### **Origin of Magic Witch Doctors**

The one recourse of the savage is to placate these spirits, winning their favor and warding off their anger. This gives rise to a complicated system of magic. In order to protect himself against the anger of these spirits, the native employs the services of the witch doctor. This witch doctor or medicine man is supposed to have great power over evil spirits. They have power to condemn to death any person suspected of causing death; they are supposed to be able to drive out the spirits that cause sickness; they may call back the spirits of those near unto death—for all of which services they demand great respect and large fees.



### Meaning of Fetiches

One of the chief methods of work of the medicine man or witch doctor is the preparation and use of fetiches. A fetich is any rag, string, stone, shell, tooth, piece of wood or what not, into which a magic doctor has coaxed a spirit to take up its abode, or into which a spirit has voluntarily entered. The material in itself is not sacred, but the fact that a spirit dwells in it gives it power to ward off sickness or defend one against his enemies. If the spirit leaves the fetich then the wood or stone is cast away and another is found. "He addresses his prayer to it and extols its virtues; but should his enterprise not prosper he will cast his deity aside as useless, and cease to worship it; he will address it with torrents of abuse, and will even beat it, to make it serve him better. It is a deity at his disposal, to serve in the accomplishment of his desires; the individual keeps gods of his own to help him in his undertakings."<sup>1</sup>

### White and Black Art

So long as these fetiches are used simply for protection the owner is a practitioner of white art, but, when they are used to injure others or force others to do certain things pleasing to the owner of the fetich, their possessor is said to practice black art. It is this latter that keeps the African native in constant fear. At any hour his enemy may by witchcraft destroy his property, rob him of his friends or take his life. All that an enemy has to do is to get some of his

<sup>1</sup>"History of Religion." p. 32. Menzies.

victim's hair, his nails, or water in which he has bathed, and have a witch doctor make a concoction which, buried in front of the victim's door or secretly hung in his room, will bring sure death. If the man dies, this black art has worked; if he fails to die, then he himself has a fetich stronger than the spirit that was trying to induce his death. In this murderous superstition the natives have absolute confidence.

### Religious Constituents

These, then, are the constituents of the African religion: A God who created man and is supreme, but who has gone away into the corner of the universe and is no longer interested in his creation; an infinite host of spirits, good and bad, which hold the destinies of men in their hands and whose favor must, therefore, be won; witch doctors and medicine men who conjure with the spirits and keep the people in constant awe; fetiches which are the habitats of spirits used for protection; and the practice of black art with all of its murderous motives and deeds. Of course, there are elements of moral power in this religion, but so much is it degraded that one almost wonders if God has been able to reveal himself in the smallest degree to these people.

### Religion of the Slave

When the Bantu slave was brought to America he brought with him all the superstitions, all the wild savagery of his religion. One does not need to go far to find that this religion still has its remnants in the life of the negro race of

to-day. In particular the fetich held sway among these benighted people—as is still exemplified in the carrying of the rabbit foot and other relics for the sake of warding off evil. “Not only did this religion of the fetich endure under slavery, it grew. It was a secret religion that lurked thinly covered in slavery days, and that lurks to-day beneath the negro’s Christian profession as a white art, and among non-professors as a black art; a memory of the revenges of his African ancestors.”<sup>1</sup> Thousands of negroes still believe implicitly in hoodoos, spirits, witchcraft, ghosts. In the city of Nashville, some years ago, a group of medical students went out to “snatch” a body for dissecting purposes. They were piloted by a negro man who betrayed them into the hands of a band of armed negroes. In the dark of the night the armed negroes shot into the party and accidentally killed the negro pilot. Since that time the house which he then occupied has not been used. No negro will rent it for fear of being troubled by the spirit of the dead man who was killed because of treachery. A negro that has had considerable schooling and has had employment among white people for years told me that the spirit of this man could be heard every night moaning and crying in the house where he had formerly lived. As a test I offered this negro five dollars to go with me at midnight into this house, which he refused, saying he would not go for five hundred. This seems to me purely a survival of the old African spirit belief. Hoodoo or Voodoo (French Creole

<sup>1</sup> “Fetichism in West Africa. p. 274. Nassau.

Vaudois—the witchcraft of the Waldensians) is no more nor less than the survival of the black art, against which a fetich or charm must be carried.

“And you’s got a rabbit foot to drive away the Hoodoo!”

It is not unlikely that the stories of Uncle Remus are direct descendants of the folk tales which lived centuries ago in Africa. In fact, many of the superstitions of the uneducated negro of to-day can be traced directly back to the African home of the slave.

### **Tenacity of Religious Tradition**

Religious tradition outlives all others, and may manifest itself long after its origin or meaning is forgotten. We need not be surprised, therefore, if we find the religious life of the American negro filled with superstition and less related to morals than our own ethical sense would demand. We must remember that New England did not throw off her witchcraft for many years and not all the white people of the South are free from belief in a hoodoo.

### **Grades of Religious Life**

It must be understood that negro religious life, like any other religious life, varies widely. There are many well educated and cultured negroes who have moved far away from all the superstitions, and in whose lives their religion is a vital moral force. Of these we will speak more at length under religious development. We are

here concerned about the elemental types of negro religion.

### **Characterization of Negro Religion**

From what has preceded we are prepared to believe that the religion of the masses may be characterized as partly superstitious, largely emotional, and in an alarmingly small degree ethical. Perhaps enough has been said to indicate the bearing of superstition upon religion. The negro has a tropical imagination which revels in the strange, mysterious or supernatural, and this type of mind, touched with a deep emotionalism and augmented by ignorance, may easily give rise to the most grotesque types of religious belief.

### **Emotional Element**

The emotionalism of the negro religion—I mean the religion of the great masses who are ignorant—is well known to every Southern man. I have visited negro churches where the sermon could scarcely be called more than a wild chant or incantation. The high shrieking voice of the preacher as he calls over and over again the refrain of his text in dull monotony—is interrupted continually by the heavy groans and occasionally by the weird cry of a happy “mourner.” Professor DuBois describes his first negro camp meeting as follows: “A sort of suppressed terror hung in the air, and seemed to seize us—a pythian madness, a demoniac possession, that lent terrible reality to song and words. The black and massive form of the

preacher swayed and quivered as the words crowded to his lips and flew at us in singular eloquence. The people moaned and fluttered, and then the gaunt-cheeked brown woman beside me suddenly leaped straight into the air and shrieked like a lost soul, while round about came wail and groan and outcry and a scene of human passion such as I had never before conceived."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. L. C. Perry, in a sociological study of the negro, printed in the Vanderbilt University Quarterly, April, 1904, gives the following account of a service in one of the cruder churches of Nashville: "A very warm evening. Every seat in the house packed and most of the standing room occupied. Two stoves nearly red hot and the door kept tightly shut. Text: 'And the Lord spoke to Daniel in the valley of dry bones, saying, Rise ye up and meet me.' The sermon began something like this: 'Brethren and sisters, I started out early one morning, a long time ago, and knew not witherward I was going for the Lord was leading of me in ways unbeknownst to me, henceward I went on and on till finally when the day got hot I came down into the valley of Jehosaphat. And as I went down the slippery walls of that slimy valley my weary feet slid over rotting bones of many hell-parched sinners. I fell not, though the valley was full of pits and horrible falls; I fell not, for a band of holy angels were rustling their wings around me to bear me upward and onward to meet my God, and they bore me on and I came to my Lord, and he was——' Here followed a descrip-

<sup>1</sup> "Souls of Black Folk," p. 190.

tion of his meeting the Lord; but what he said could not be understood, for his voice was drowned by the shouts of twenty-five or more people. 'Then my Lord told me to come here to Nashville, to Kayne Avenue, and preach to his chosen lambs for to rise up and meet their God——' Then much more shouting, which, in fact, never entirely died out at any time, and only at intervals allowed the speaker to be heard. The harangue lasted in this strain for an hour and a half without touching the ground."

### Negro Prayers

"The prayers are often more offensive than the sermon. Bass Street Church, first Sunday evening in May. A very small house, only forty-five present, and six of them preachers. The pastor called on one of the young preachers to pray. He prayed eleven minutes, and, after the first few sentences, fell into a perfectly uniform mode of expression and monotonous chant. His sentences were all alike, with the exception of only one clause in each. "O! Lord, my God, wilt thou be so good and so kind and so merciful as to condescend as to bless us? O! Lord, my God, wilt thou be so good and so kind and so merciful as to condescend as to bless our little children?" And on and on with the use of this same expression till a blessing had been invoked on everything imaginable, from the stars in heaven even to the pavements of the streets, while at the same time another preacher was keeping up a symmetrical chant of response: "O! yes, Lord grant it; O! do Lord, amen and

amen. O! yes, Lord grant it; O! do Lord, amen and amen." And a layman, presumably so from his position out in the congregation, also kept a chant going; but he uttered no word that could be distinguished, though at certain evenly measured intervals his voice rose very high. And then, besides all of this, there was another man whose action is hard to describe or name. He was perfectly quiet except at well-measured points in the prayer, about twenty seconds apart, when he raised a hideous, indescribable snort, more like the sound of an animal than a human being. The effect of all this was weird, and one often had to pull himself together to realize that he was still in Nashville and had not been suddenly transported to Africa."

### **Lack of Ethical Content**

Naturally, a superstitious and emotional religion does not do much to affect the standard of morals. It is not simply a discrepancy between creed and practice, as Kelly Miller puts it, for that is found often among whites, but, with the mass of the negroes, religion is lacking both in ethical creed and ethical practice. Religion is a thing to die by and not to live by. It has reference to states of ecstasy but little to do with a man's state of morals. A negro man of much more than average sense—one whom I have known for years and have never known him to be dishonest or untruthful—said to me about his preacher lately: "He's a purty good lecturer, but he can't preach much." When I questioned him I found he meant that his preacher was good



at making appeals for honesty, purity, sobriety, etc., but he did not use much "gravy" as they call the sing-song chant and hysterical oratory. A teacher in a negro college told me once that many of their graduates went out with the idea of preaching a real gospel of moral life, but the pressure from the congregations they served was so great that they frequently had to abandon their gospel and more and more fall into the habit of putting on the "rousements."

#### **Rev. W. H. Holloway's Testimony**

Rev. W. H. Holloway, a graduate of Talladega College, a Congregational minister in charge of a colored church in Thomas County, Ga., in a study of the negro church in that county, writes as follows:

"The supreme element in the old system was emotionalism, and while we hate to confess it truth demands that we affirm it as the predominating element to-day. The church which does not have its shouting, the church which does not measure the abilities of a preacher by the 'rousement' of his sermons, and, indeed, which does not tacitly demand of its minister the shout-producing discourse, is an exception to the rule. This is true of the towns as well as the country. Of course, we all understand that it has always occupied first place in the worship of the negro church; it is a heritage of the past. In the absence of clearly defined doctrines, the great shout, accompanied with weird cries and shrieks and contortions and followed by a multivariied 'experience' which takes the candidate through the

most heart-rending scenes—this to-day in Thomas County is accepted by the majority of the churches as unmistakable evidence of regeneration.”

I spoke some time since at a negro university on sins of men and after the address the negro physician, himself a Christian man, told me that ninety-eight per cent. was too low an estimate for the negro men who live or have lived impure lives, and yet forty-eight per cent. of them are church members. This divorcement of religion and morals is perhaps the most serious phase of the negro problem.

#### **Encouragement in Spite of this Picture**

I am well aware that I have not drawn a bright picture. A religion divorced from morals, with intense emotionalism and with crudest superstitions is not altogether a hopeful factor in developing a race. One does not like to write such a statement but one must be true to facts. And yet all is not hopeless. There is a brighter side to the picture. It is surely hopeful that such a large proportion of the negroes are religious, that the religious hunger is planted deep in their nature. When there is a hungering and thirsting, there is a chance that men may be filled. This very fact of the religious nature of the negro gives the surest indication that he can be helped, that he can be moralized, that he can be made into a true citizen. We only need to help him purify his ideas of religion, and that is never so difficult a task as to create a capacity for religious truth.

#### **A Progressive Minority**

There is a second sign of hope in the fact that

there is a growing minority of the race with a religion of moral content. I heard a sermon by a negro preacher recently on the text: "I am the way, the truth and the life." It was clear, logical and full of practical suggestion. It is sheer pessimism, if not ignorant prejudice, or perhaps it is both, to say that religion with all negroes is divorced from morality. I know negroes—even uneducated negroes—whose religion means honesty, truthfulness, and purity. I know negroes of culture with whom religion has as much of content as it has for the cultured white man. This is the foundation for a real hope. If a minority has moved up into a realm of genuine religion, then the mass, with sufficient cultivation and care, may be brought into the same realm. If any considerable minority is capable of knowing and practicing genuine religious truth, there is possibility of redeeming the whole race from its ignorance, its superstition and its immorality. If anyone doubts that there is such a minority the one way to convince himself is to visit some of the best negro churches and see for himself. Let him come to know some of the best negroes and watch their conduct and even the most skeptical will be convinced.

These two pictures put on every man who reads an obligation. If there is a minority with a real religion of moral and spiritual content, and if there is a great mass with a religion of low moral and low spiritual content, then it is our duty as enlightened Christian men to give to this second class a vital Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter I.

### The Missionary Appeal

The greatest appeal that a missionary from the heart of Africa, or of China, or of India, can make is this: "The people are in ignorance, they are in sin, their religions are full of errors, they do not know our God—we have a real gospel of life and we must take it to them, for they are capable of receiving and are glad to hear." This is precisely the appeal that can be made on behalf of the lower half of the negroes at our very doors. It is splendid to have a missionary spirit, but God knows no home or foreign lands—he simply knows that a black man in America may be as needy as a black man in Africa and His Gospel will help both alike.

### The Negro Church

*Curry* { The embodied expression of religion is the Church and no discussion of negro religion would be complete without some word about church life. In the early days of slavery in America there was great question as to whether slaves should be allowed to receive baptism or to join the church, lest such action might make them free. It always seemed somewhat incongruous for a man who was a Christian and a church member to be a slave. However, Virginia, in 1667, passed a law that "Baptism doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom, in order that divers masters freed from this doubt may more carefully endeavor the propagation of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> North Carolina passed a similar law in 1670 and so the propagation of Christianity among slaves went on.

<sup>1</sup> "The Negro Church," p. 8.

### **The Church in Slave Days**

Most of the converted slaves belonged to the white churches since it was feared that separate churches would give too great opportunity for the stirring up of discontent and strife. Indeed, a number of the States went so far as to make it a finable offense for any master to allow his slaves to build or worship in a separate church. However, the records show that "various masters had their own ministers whom they paid to instruct their slaves in religious matters."

### **Early Work. Moravians**

The Moravians early began a missionary work among the negroes. As early as 1735 missionaries were sent into South Carolina and Georgia to preach the gospel. Work was also undertaken among the negroes of Philadelphia.

### **Presbyterians**

The Presbyterians, under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Davis, began work in Virginia before the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1755 Dr. Davis writes: "A considerable number of them had been baptized, after a proper time for instruction, having given creditable evidence not only of their acquaintance with the important doctrines of the Christian religion, but also a deep sense of them in their minds, attested by a life of strict piety and holiness."<sup>1</sup>

### **Methodists**

In 1776 the Methodists began work in Virginia and in the great revivals that followed

<sup>1</sup>"The Negro Church," p. 17.

many negroes, along with the whites, were converted. The minutes of the Methodist Conference for 1786 show a membership of 18,791 whites and 1890 colored. In 1791, there were 12,884 colored members reported; in 1792, there were 13,871; in 1793, there were 16,227; in 1794, there were 13,814; in 1795, 12,179. The decrease in numbers is probably due to the great revivals in the Baptist Church during the last two years mentioned, and the preaching of colored ministers which drew many members from other churches into the Baptist fold. According to the order of the conference of 1790 the Bishops, elders and preachers were to appoint leaders for schools to be taught on Sundays from 6:00 to 10:00 A.M. and from 2:00 to 6:00 P.M., in which all colored children who desired might be taught to read the Bible.

### Baptists

Between 1785 and 1792 during the great Baptist revivals many negroes were converted and brought into the Baptist Church. In 1792 the first colored Baptist church was built in the city of Charleston, the city contributing the lot. This denomination had had negro preachers for twenty years prior to this time.

### Awakening of 1830

About 1830 there was a great revival of interest among all the churches of the South in the evangelization of the slaves. "A reaction set in about 1835, and the Methodists and Baptists especially were active among the slaves.

A minister in Mississippi testified that he had charge of the negroes of five plantations and three hundred slaves; another in Georgia visited eighteen plantations every two weeks. 'Two owners have built three good churches at their own expense, all framed, 290 members have been added, and about 400 children are instructed.' Another traveling minister declared, in 1841, that in many places like Baltimore, Alexandria, and Charleston, the negroes had large spacious churches, and he thinks there were 500,000 negro church members at the time."<sup>1</sup> Whether this is an overestimation or not we cannot determine, but it indicates that the Southern churches and the owners of slaves were far from unmindful of their duty to look after the moral life of the slaves.

In 1860, according to Bishop McTyiere, the number of slaves that were members of the Southern conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church were 207,000. This church alone through its conference in the Southern States contributed between the years of 1844 and 1860, inclusive, \$1,320,778.03 for the evangelization of the slaves. In the year 1861 this church alone had 327 missionaries among the negroes and spent \$86,359.20.<sup>2</sup>

### Organization of Separate Negro Churches

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1816 at Baltimore by the withdrawal of a number of negro members from the Metho-

<sup>1</sup> "The Negro Church," p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> "Gospel Among the Slaves." p. 318. Harrison & Barnes.

dist Episcopal Church. Rev. Richard Allen was elected their first Bishop by this organizing conference. This church has now about half a million members and nearly three thousand organized churches.

Another branch from the Methodist Episcopal Church is the African Methodist Episcopal Zion organized in 1811. It now has nearly four hundred thousand adherents.

The Colored Methodist Episcopal is a branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and was organized in 1870. It now has a membership approximating one hundred and fifty thousand.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church (colored) was organized in 1869, at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It has fifteen thousand members and property valued at two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

Regular Baptists (colored) constitute the largest single communion of negroes. The first Colored Baptist Convention was organized in North Carolina, 1866. They now have a million and a half members and property valued at ten millions of dollars.

### Summary of Negro Churches

The census of 1890 gives the total number of members or communicants as 2,673,977 and the total property valuation at \$26,626,448. It seems likely that the 1910 census will give a total membership of between four and four and a half millions. Mr. John Wesley Gilbert, of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, estimates that prop-





erty valuation now aggregates forty millions of dollars. Here is a powerful organization. What is its strength and what are its weaknesses?

### **Inclusive Character of Negro Church Its First Source of Strength**

The first element of the strength of the Negro Church lies in its all-inclusive character. It is not simply the place for worship, it is also the social center of the race, the place of amusement and to an extent the place for gathering information. The negro church has been called the first distinctively negro American social institution. During slave days the home was not a place of much social power. While there were many masters who did what they could to give their slaves something of home life, the conditions were such and the past history of the slave was such that little could be effected. It easily came about, therefore, that the church stood for whatever of social ideals the negro had. After the war, the home life of the negro improved very slowly and even to this day there is really no home life for great masses of negroes. The church, therefore, still holds its sway as a powerful social factor.

### **The Church and Amusement**

Likewise the church is the center of amusement. In few cities do the negroes have any theaters, amusement halls, etc. Hence the church has had to step in and become the center of amusement. Here the debating club holds sway; here in later days the moving picture is seen. The fact that the church is the center of

amusements has put a severe ban on many forms of pleasure. There is practically no outdoor amusement for the negro, save peeping over the fence to see a white ball game, or in the country or small town district having a country "break down." The fact that the negro church has been the center both of the social life and of the pleasure life of the negro has given to it a very firm hold on the negro race.

### **Material Equipment**

A second fact of real importance is the material equipment of the negro church. While many of the buildings are poor and uninviting, it must be acknowledged that the race has done splendidly to erect buildings aggregating in cost \$40,000,000. This is no small asset for the power of the church.

### **Breadth of Influence**

Another strength of the church lies in the fact that it reaches almost the whole community instead of just a fraction of the community as is the case of the white church. It is estimated that forty-eight per cent. of the negroes are church members and many more are adherents and regular attendants. However poor the gospel that is preached, there is power for good in the fact that the vast majority of the race has respect for the church and attend its services.

### **Educated Ministers**

Possibly the most important asset of the negro church lies in its increasing number of educated

ministers. On the darker side of the question we must say a word later, but it is only fair to say here that the standard is certainly rising. In the cities where the problems are more difficult there is an increasing number of pastors that are college and seminary graduates. In such churches the service is orderly, the sermons are wholesome, logical and practical. This is perhaps the most encouraging sign of the whole negro problem to-day.

### **Uneducated Ministry a Weakness**

With all of these elements of strength there are also not a few weaknesses in the negro church. The first of these is the other side of our last sentence—the low average intelligence and morality of the negro ministry. Here, lest we shall be unfair in our judgment, let a negro minister speak:

#### **Dougherty County, Georgia**

"We have been able to learn of about 120 preachers in the county. Of this number fully seventy-five are either ordained or licensed. The most of their names appear in the minutes of the various denominations. Now this number may be almost doubled if we search for all those who call themselves preachers and fill the function of interpreters of the Word of God. This number moulds as great a sentiment for or against the church as those who hold license."

"You will get some idea of the vast host who belong to this class when I tell you that the records of the last conference of the Southwest

Georgia District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church show that there were forty-three applicants for admission to the conference. Note that this is only one of the four or five conferences of this church in the State. Be it said, to the lasting credit of the conference, that it in unmistakable terms put the stamp of condemnation upon the presumption of about thirty-five of them and sent them back to their homes disappointed men. And yet, while it sent them back home unadmitted, it did not make them less determined to preach, for in their several communities you will find them still exercising themselves in the holy calling."<sup>1</sup>

#### Character of Ministers

In an investigation made by Atlanta University concerning the character of the negro ministry, two hundred negro laymen were asked their opinion of the moral character of negro preachers. It is remarkable that only thirty-seven gave decided answers of approval. All the others made some qualifications. Among faults mentioned by these negro laymen were selfishness, deceptiveness, love for money, sexual impurity, dogmatism, laziness, ignorance, etc. It cannot be doubted that these adjectives carry all too large a truth. In this connection also may be mentioned again the type of preaching done by many of these ministers. It is highly emotional and lacking in any practical moral message.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. W. H. Holloway. Study of Thomas County, Ga. "The Negro Church," p. 61.

### Church Splits

Another weakness of the church lies in its spirit of rivalry and dissensions. None of the churches seem so far to have devised a system of government that will cement its members into strong, compact organizations. In most cases organization counts for little, personal prejudice counts for much. If debate arises in the church over the ability of a preacher, one wing will pull off and establish a new church. Hence it arises that many of the negro churches are family churches, being the relatives and friends of some dissenting pastor who organized the new church. Rev. W. H. Holloway declares that of the ninety-eight churches in Thomas County, Georgia, about half of them originated out of a church split. "I know of no rural churches in Thomas County whose inception had the careful nursing of an educated, cultured leader. The largest churches and the biggest preachers in Thomas County do little home missionary work and organize no new churches."<sup>1</sup> This means that there are twice as many church organizations as there should be, there are too many church buildings, that congregations are too small, and hence salaries paid to ministers cannot be large enough to secure competent men.

In going over the list of fifty-four churches in the City of Atlanta, I find seventeen churches with less than one hundred members, the average membership of these seventeen being thirty. Only eight of the fifty-four had more than two hundred, and only four had more than three hun-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Negro Church," p. 57.

dred members. Eleven of these Atlanta churches are the outgrowth of church splits.

In the City of Nashville there are fifty-two negro churches, the average membership of which is two hundred and seven, while the average in the white churches is nearly twice as great, three hundred and ninety. There are seventeen negro churches in Nashville with less than one hundred members each. This condition at once accounts for poor church buildings and the low grade of ministers.

### **Loose Business Methods**

Lack of business methods is another weakness of the negro church. In this the negro church has no monopoly, as, indeed, it has not in any of the other weaknesses mentioned. All of these weaknesses are simply more marked in the negro than in the white church. Of one hundred and sixty-five negro laymen asked concerning the progress of the negro church, thirty-five answered decidedly that its financial management was very bad. Again, let a negro minister speak for us on this question:

"Another condition which gives rise to our assertion that the church is not exercising its highest moral influence, is seen in its lax business methods. Let us give one example, which we dare assert is true of nine-tenths of the churches in Thomas County, and in the South: A contract is made with every incoming minister. They promise him a stipulated sum for his year's service, and when the year ends he goes to conference with only about two-thirds of the pledge

fulfilled. If he is sent back to the same field, the second year finds the church still deeper on the debit side of the ledger. If he is sent to another field the debt is considered settled, a new contract is made with the new preacher, and the same form is gone through."<sup>1</sup>

### **Danger of Losing Its Aim**

Lastly, we must mention the fact that the non-essentials of the church are in danger of absorbing its whole life to the exclusion of its real functions of religious teaching. The numerous church socials, the multitudinous societies, the prominence given to certain rites and ceremonies, fill the life of the average church member to a dangerous extent. The church is primarily a place for worship, for religious instruction, and for religious fellowship and service. When it loses its distinctively religious character it is in danger of losing its power.

### **The Appeal of Facts**

Here, then, is a problem of no small concern to every Southern man. We live in a section of the country where eight million colored people live. Whatever affects the lives of these people affects our lives. The colored man is a decidedly religious being, but if his religion is not worthy it will degrade rather than elevate him. The church which fosters his religion is torn with internal dissensions which weaken its power and dissipate its energies; its ministers are all too frequently ignorant, lazy and immoral; its gos-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Negro Church," p. 60.

pel is in many cases an emotional hysteria, with little reference to morals; and the majority of white men are either ignorant or indifferent to these facts. Shall we, as southern college men, not be statesmen-like enough to see the importance of this present situation, and lend our help in meeting the present needs? And the conditions are by no means hopeless. The negro is teachable, he is deeply religious, he looks to the white man for counsel, he will welcome aid from any college man—and, what is best of all, he is making substantial progress in higher religious ideals.



## VI

WHAT CAN WE DO?

## RIGHT'S SECURITY

What if the wind do howl without,  
And turn the creaking weather-vane;  
What if the arrows of the rain  
Do beat against the window-pane?  
Art thou not armored strong and fast  
Against the sallies of the blast?  
Art thou not sheltered safe and well  
Against the flood's insistent swell?

What boots it, that thou stand'st alone,  
And laughest in the battle's face  
When all the weak have fled the place  
And let their feet and fears keep pace?  
Thou wavest still thine ensign high,  
And shouted thy loud battle-cry;  
Higher than e'er the tempest roared,  
It cleaves the silence like a sword.

Right arms and armors, too, that man  
Who will not compromise with wrong;  
Though single, he must front the throng,  
And wage the battle hard and long.  
Minorities, since time began,  
Have shown the better side of man;  
And often in the lists of time  
One man has made a cause sublime!

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

## VI

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

#### **Present Social Awakening**

Ours may be characterized as a sociological age. Men are thinking to-day in terms of social life. It would be safe to say that more books dealing with social questions have come from the press within the last twenty-five years than in all the previous centuries of the world's history. There is a widespread awakening to the facts of all humanity and a consequent interest in them. One would scarcely dare to say that this is a wholly modern movement, for it has its roots deep in the soil of the past, but its flower can hardly be said to have burst into bloom until this present generation.

#### **World Unity**

At least three elements—each of which have had much accentuation during the last decade—have entered into this growing social consciousness. First of these may be mentioned the principle of a spiritual monism. Slowly, but surely, philosophy has been moving away from the various forms of dualism, until it now proclaims a unifying element in the universe, into which all forces and all beings are caught up and knit into **one complete whole.** Behind the forces of

nature there is a supreme force; behind the lives of the universe, there is a supreme life; and these blend into a complete and perfect personality, whom Christians call God. Such seems to be the decided tendency of science and philosophy.

### **Sacredness of the Individual**

The second element is but a corollary of the first—the growing sacredness of the individual. If all life is unified in one supreme life, each individual is enhanced in value because it is a part of the all inclusive and the universal. It partakes of the divine nature, and is to be judged not by what it possesses, but by what it is and by that to which it is related. This thought is as old as the book of Job, for there the writer says: If I have despised the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb? Job 31:13-15. This was the supreme teaching of Jesus Christ—out of which grew His universal sympathy—but, strange to say, the Christian Church is just coming to realize the tremendous meaning of this conception.

### **Social Responsibility**

Growing out of these two is the third element of modern social ideals, namely, the sense of responsibility which one man feels for the well-being of all other men. If there is one supreme

person—a Father God; if each individual is caught up into that Godhood and so becomes sacred; then, each man is brother to his neighbor, just because they are both alike sons of God—and every true brother must be interested in, and, so far as his power extends, responsible for, the welfare of every other brother in this universal household. Such, it seems to me, is the real meaning of this new social awakening.

### **Loyalty to Social Ideals**

If, then, this is the highest development of human thought—if our philosophy, our science, and our religion have led us to this—that each individual is sacred and we have an obligation to him because of what he is—then, we, who desire to be loyal to the highest, must let this highest find expression in our attitude, in our words, and in our deeds; for, as Dr. Royce has said, “Loyalty, as you see, is essentially an active virtue. It involves manifold sentiments—love good-will, earnestness, delight in the cause, but it is complete only in the motor terms, never in merely sentimental terms. It is useless to call my feelings loyal unless my muscles somehow express my loyalty.”<sup>1</sup> The enunciation of a social principle has far-reaching meaning for our present discussion, for if a man is sacred just because he is a human individual, we will need to realize anew that the negro has a claim on our sympathy and help. President King, in his latest volume, has well put it: “We can

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<sup>1</sup> “Race Questions and Other American Problems,” p. 239.

hardly claim, indeed, to have risen to the level of even the common consciousness of our time, if we are not ready to recognize the ideals of others, though expressed in quite unconventional forms. The willingness to see and to cherish ideals, and the heroism persistently to live or unhesitatingly to die for them, let us be sure, is not confined to our clique or to our race. Have we really open eyes for the hidden ideals in the lives that seem to us unlike our own—laborer, capitalist, negro, white, educated, uneducated, quick or slow? It is not a true interpretation of Christian law of love which insists upon either racial or class barriers to the setting aside of the far more fundamental likeness of men. We owe reverence and faith and love not merely to those whom we call our own, but to all—in the significant words of Jesus, ‘despairing of no man’ (Luke, 6:35, margin). And we shall have no final peace, either as individuals or as a nation, until we recognize in its entirety this primal law of Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

### The Real Question

Now, the real point of the race question is not *shall we have social intermingling—but shall we recognize that the other man has a soul, is a real human personality*—in spite of the fact that he often lives on a back alley, wears poor clothes, uses a broken language, and has a black skin. I have sometimes felt that we really do not believe the negro is possessed of human personality.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ethics of Jesus,” p. 246.

This fact came to me with intensity some years ago as I was riding on a Pullman car through Alabama. We stopped rather long at some small station, and I noted, without asking the cause, that a very large crowd of colored people were gathered on the station platform. After the train had started again, a traveling man, who had gone out to see what was wrong, returned to the car, and was asked by his companion the cause of the delay. "Oh, nothing," replied the drummer, "one 'nigger' shot another, and they were loading the wounded one on to carry him to the nearest town with a hospital." Then and there it dawned upon me that we really did not appreciate the sacredness of humanity, provided that humanity be clothed in a dark skin.

Professor DuBois describes in beautiful and heart-searching English the death of his own baby boy. He tells how dark the day seemed to him as the carriages rolled along through the crowded streets of Atlanta behind the hearse, which carried the lifeless form of the child, as dear to him as life. As the crowd parted for a moment to let the procession pass, some one inquired who it was that had died. Professor DuBois heard the reply as it broke in upon his saddened heart—"Just 'niggers.'" Do you wonder that he is sometimes bitter?

One would be disposed to charge him with over-emphasizing the indifference of white men if we had not lived all our lives in the midst of these conditions and had not heard such expressions hundreds of times. These, of course, are the

expressions of the coarser element of white men, and yet they indicate a tendency to forget that a subject race is not a dehumanized race. It should be said also that this attitude toward a weaker race is not seen alone in the South. I have seen things in Northern cities, and heard words to and about foreigners which made my blood boil. When I was making a tour of the Pacific Coast colleges, I saw treatment of Japanese which I could scarcely keep from resenting with physical violence—but I reflected that this was only parallel to the attitude of the coarser element of my own section toward a backward race.

#### **Attitude Toward Dependent Races**

Mr. Milligan, in his charming book, "The Jungle Folk of Africa," tells us the story of the treatment of the Krubos, who load and unload the ships on the West Coast. This work is exceedingly dangerous, on account of poor harbors and heavy surf, and none with less endurance, skill and bravery than these Africans would dare undertake the task.

One day the sea was so very dangerous, "the boys presented themselves in a body before one of the officers and said: 'Mastah, them sea be bad too much. We no be fit for land cargo. S'pose we try, we go loss all cargo, and plenty man's life. So please excuse to-day, Mastah, for we think to-morrow go be fine.'

"The answer they received was a volley of profanity and curses. 'Just because one of them was killed they all turn cowards,' said one. 'Al-



ways thinking of themselves,' said another. With many such shrewd observations and sundry moral exhortations to bravery, the boats were lowered and they were ordered into them."

"One day our boys went ashore early in the morning, leaving the ship at half-past five. They were expecting to make the trip before breakfast, as usual, and therefore had nothing to eat before starting. They had landed the cargo safely at the trading-house; but the sea was so bad that they could not get off to the ship all that day. They made several unsuccessful attempts, and it was almost night before they succeeded. Meanwhile, the swell was so heavy that we had steamed far out for safety, and were anchored seven miles from the shore. The boys reached the ship after dark, and we then learned that the white trader ashore had given them nothing to eat, although the ship would have repaid him. Those boys had battled with the sea and with hunger, not having had a taste of food all that day."

"Only a short time afterwards, one evening at the table, an officer who had been ashore told us a story that was intended to prove the cruelty of the native. A white trader, he said, had caught a young elephant. He went away on a journey to the bush, leaving the care of it to his native workmen. Upon his return, after several months, he found the elephant in very poor health, and a few weeks later it died. There was no doubt that the natives had neglected to feed it in his absence, and this was the cause of its death. Horrible cruelty of the beastly native!

Pungent remarks, appropriate to the occasion, were contributed all around the table. For myself, I was thinking of those starved and tired boys battling with a raging sea. But I said not a word. What would be the use?"

So ever it is that a weak and dependent race is badly used by those that are greedy and unscrupulous. One cannot refrain from calling attention to Christ's parable in Matt. 25:34-46: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." The application of these words to the problem in hand cannot by any possibility be escaped, by the man of open mind.

### Test of White Civilization

We have heard much discussion of whether the negro would be able to stand the test of contact with a more advanced civilization. In my opinion this is not at all the real question. The question at issue is, *will the white man, with his superior training, greater advancement, and larger opportunities, be able to stand the test of contact with a less fortunate race?* Every race, as well as every individual, must be finally judged by its attitude toward, and its treatment of, those who are not able to protect themselves. The father that despises one of his children because it is weaker physically or mentally, is branded as a savage. The boy that "picks on" another under his size is promptly denominated a bully and a coward. Not less will the race that deals unfairly with a weaker and more infantile race be judged of God to be unworthy of its heritage. "The responsibility of a privi-

leged people" is the key thought of one of the world's greatest prophetic utterances. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," said Amos to the highly favored Israelites, "Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities."

### A National Question

The supreme race questions of this nation are not whether the Chinese and Japanese on the Pacific Coast will be able to meet the demands of a more exacting civilization; not whether the European immigrant of the East is the equal of the native American; not whether the negro of the South can ever measure up to the standard of achievement of his white neighbor — *but whether in all these varying situations we Americans, with our boasted culture, larger wealth, and splendid opportunities, will be able so to deal with these weaker peoples as to prove to God and to the world that we are a race of superior advancement.* Our culture and our civilization are not given us for selfish use. We are simply the custodians of these rich blessings. Just as the new social consciousness demands that a man of accumulated millions shall use it for the good of humanity—so the social sense of the world at large will sooner or later demand that we shall use our culture and our civilization to elevate those less fortunate than ourselves.

### Fair Mindedness Toward the Negro

Thus, we have revealed the first great service that we can render to the negro race. We must

change public opinion. We must see to it that he is no longer thought of simply as a brute, but as a human being. Here there needs to be discrimination—and the crowd rarely ever discriminates. Because one negro, or a dozen, or two score, or several thousand may be brutish and commit brutal crimes, it is neither fair-minded nor just to accuse the whole race as being without souls. There are many brutal white men. Many of them are as low in sin and shame as human thought can imagine, and yet we assert the essential dignity and sacredness of the individual. If we are to be fair to the negro, we must recognize that there are various stratas within that race, and that many of them are working hard to acquire culture and character. We shall give the race a great impetus when we help the world to recognize that they must have a fair chance—that they must be treated as human personalities.

### **Obligation to Know the Negro**

Another aim we need to set for ourselves is a more thorough knowledge of the negro's condition. Our attention was called, in the first chapter, to the ignorance of our white people concerning negro life. It should be the deliberate purpose of every college man to know more about this problem. This book claims to do nothing but point the way. Each man must investigate for himself. We must go to their homes just to see how they live, we must visit their schools to find how they think, we must visit their churches to know how they worship.

To the man who is in earnest about life there can be no more fascinating study than to find just how this "other half lives." It must always be remembered that this can be done well only in the sympathetic spirit.

### **Visit Schools and Churches**

But we can do much more than investigate conditions. There is the very greatest need for men that have higher ideals to lend their help and encouragement in the matter of education and religion. It would mean much to the negro youth if more white men visited their schools and made addresses that would fire the ambition of these backward children. Character is made by setting ideals—and who can better do this than the educated white men of the South? In like manner, we would do well to speak in their churches, giving them addresses on the practical ethical problems. I cannot imagine a greater service that we could render. In particular, addresses could be given to the men and boys on questions of social purity which might be of very great benefit. I gave such an address recently to a group of negro men, and many of them said afterwards it was the only address of the kind they had ever heard. If we are looking for some practical service, here is the chance.

### **Negro Sunday Schools**

In this connection, one is reminded of the large opportunity for service through the negro Sunday school. There is hardly a negro church

that would not welcome the services of a college man to teach its Bible class for older people, or to teach a group of younger men, or a class of boys. In the city of Nashville, the Methodist Training School is sending out Bible teachers to a number of churches. I have visited some of these churches, and it was with evident pride and appreciation that they told me of this help.

In other places there is need for the organization of Sunday schools in those sections of the city or country where there are no churches. Hampden-Sidney students have been doing this for a number of years. They organize small schools anywhere within a radius of three or four miles of the college, and students go out to teach.

#### **Presbyterian Colored Mission**

One of the most notable undertakings of the kind is that of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Rev. John Little, who was one of the student founders of this particular Sunday school, and is now in charge as superintendent, gives the following account of its inception: "At a business meeting of the Students' Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, November, 1897, the needs of the colored people were mentioned, and the suggestion made that a Sunday school be organized for their instruction. Six students volunteered to teach in such a Sunday school, and plans were formulated to begin the work. We thought it would be an easy matter to secure a house, but we found landlords very

cautious about renting buildings for this purpose. Twenty-five vacant houses were inspected before one could be rented."

"The house was formerly a lottery office, and was well known to the people of the neighborhood. This site was selected because it was in the midst of a densely settled negro district. These negroes were very poor, and day and night were exposed to vice. Saloons were on every corner; gambling places were numerous."

"A definite site on Preston Street—a main thoroughfare—having been selected, the six teachers divided themselves into three groups, going two and two. Each group took a street and visited every house, and in the tenement houses every room. They gave a personal invitation to each member of the family to attend the services and left a printed card giving the name of the mission, the location, and the hours for services. This plan was persistently followed until the building was crowded."

"In the homes we were well received, and invited to come again. In the majority of cases the family promised to attend the next Sunday, 'If I live, and nothing happens.' In nine cases out of ten 'something happened' to the parents, for very few of the older people came to the mission in the early days. In later days they came in larger numbers."

### **The School Opened**

"The doors were opened in February, 1898 and 23 negro pupils were enrolled. Within a month the attendance had grown to 40. Our room was

full, and special efforts to secure a larger attendance ceased, and we tried to develop the character of those enrolled."

"The first session of this Sunday school revealed the great need of the people dwelling in this section of the city. Here we found hundreds of children, within the sound of the bells of white and colored churches, who never attended. The pupils were arranged as in an ordinary school. The singing was good, and this natural gift has been developed until the music is excellent. . . ."

This work has grown until, in 1909, there were 450 regular Sunday school students; there were sewing classes for girls, woodwork classes for boys, classes in basketry, cooking, etc. What is fully as important, playgrounds have been arranged where colored boys can go for an afternoon of clean sport. Such a work as this can be reproduced in any city in the South, if only men can be found with large enough faith and sufficient spirit of self-sacrifice.

### **Famous Examples**

For this kind of work we have the very best of precedent in the work of such men as Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee. On one of my visits to Washington and Lee University, I walked out into the country and chanced upon an old man, who had been one of the negro boys in the Sunday school conducted by Jackson before the war, Jackson then being a professor

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<sup>1</sup>For further facts, address Rev. John Little, 540 Roselane, Louisville, Ky.



at Virginia Military Institute. The old man was very proud of the fact that he sat under the famous General, and quoted a number of Scripture passages to prove that he had profited by such instruction. With such an illustrious example, we can well afford to have our share in such a worthy work.

### **Helping Colored Young Men's Christian Associations**

Again, our colleges located in cities where there are also negro schools, can be of large service by helping to foster the Colored Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association among these colored students. The president of the Young Men's Christian Association in the white college can meet the committees of the colored Association, and give ideas that will be invaluable. This particular suggestion comes to me from a negro, the president of a negro college, and from a Christian worker among his students. In like manner, men can help in carrying on the Bible study work of the Young Men's Christian Association. I made a visit a year or two ago to Carlisle Indian School, Carlisle, Pa., and while there, we enrolled four hundred Indian students in Bible study. There were no students in the school sufficiently prepared to lead these classes. We, therefore, secured leaders from Dickinson College and Dickinson Seminary to go over once each week and do this work. Why should not the students of the South, who believe that the negro student should

know the Bible, go out to these schools to conduct Association classes?

### **Athletic Help, etc.**

Another place where the white students may serve the colored is in athletics. As a rule, the negro school is not able to employ coaches or to secure desirable officials for games. And there is no greater need in the negro school than a genuine athletic life. Those of us that have defended athletics in our own schools on the basis of their moral influence, and of their physical uplift, must readily understand that the colored student needs this even more. At Vanderbilt University, athletic men have gone out to Fisk, Roger Williams, and Meharry for years to act as officials in such games, and wherever I have chanced upon one of the students of these institutions, they have always had a most kindly feeling toward all Vanderbilt men. There is no surer way to settle the race question than in these small matters to indicate our interest in these men, and our willingness to help them.

### **Boy's Clubs**

In like manner, university students can be of the greatest service to the boys of the negro race if they will organize them into clubs and give them a chance to have some clean and wholesome fun. One of the most serious difficulties in connection with the negro problem is the fact that there are no playgrounds, no places of amusement for these boys. A colored boy cannot play ball, he cannot play tennis, he cannot go to a

gymnasium, he cannot go swimming in the city—because there is no place open to him. A few years ago some colored men rented a small park in Atlanta for the sake of having ball games for colored boys. But some white man in the vicinity complained, and the park was closed by the city officials. A colored man in Atlanta told me that there was not a single decent place of amusement, so far as he knew, where negroes could go. No wonder we are turning out crops of criminals. A negro boy is just like a white boy—he has the play instinct. If this instinct is not legitimately gratified, he is either stunted by too constant work and no play, or else he is demoralized by no work, no play, and all loafing. I believe some of these conditions can be righted by our college men and our churches. If we will organize negro boys' clubs, where these boys can be brought together for military training, or for simple games, or for any type of amusement that is wholesome, together with such other more serious and helpful activities as may seem wise, we may bring great blessing to the whole race.

### **Reform Schools Needed**

In this connection, it should be said that reform schools have been established for delinquent white boys in most States; but the colored boy who commits a petty crime is thrust right in with the most hardened criminals, and is soon turned out with criminal instincts. From the standpoint of economy alone, this is poor policy, for the boy that becomes a criminal is a constant

burden on the State, when he might have been saved to the State for a real factor in production.

### **Racial Integrity**

One cannot refrain from saying a word here about that other crying evil which is the plague of white and black alike. Much has been said about the horrors of an unnamable crime perpetrated by negro men. The negro race, as a whole, condemns this, and all the better classes are helping in the detection and prosecution of the criminals. But I have had more than one honest and worthy negro man tell me that we would never put a stop to this crime until white men ceased their ravages of colored girls. Of course, it cannot be denied that many colored girls court the favor of white men, but the white man is the stronger, and should be held most responsible. But this is only one side of the question. There is another and a blacker side. A college president recently told me of a case which was enough to make one's blood boil. A negro drayman, after giving his daughter all the training possible at home, sent her away to the Prairie View Normal, in Texas, where she graduated, having in mind teaching as a life work. Meanwhile, an unscrupulous, but wealthy, white man became attracted by her looks and followed her back to her small Mississippi town in the attempt to persuade her to return with him as his personal slave. The father of this girl went to my friend, the white college president, and asked him what to do. Said he: "This white man is hanging about trying to rob my daughter

of her purity. If I kill him, I will be mobbed in an hour, and if I let him alone, I may lose the hope and pride of a lifetime." No wonder the colored man rebels at such an unjust situation.

### **Negro Testimony**

At a meeting held in Atlanta, to which I have referred in the introduction of this book, the hardest charge brought against the white man by the negro delegates present was the fact that many negro girls who would withstand the appeals of negro men were helpless, and lost their virtue to white men who employed them or who might have enough money to turn their simple heads.

### **The Blackest Crime**

There has been no small talk about social equality. I do not believe in social intermingling, nor do the best class of negroes. But where a white man uses his larger power and influence to force a negro girl to give up her purity, there is no question of social equality involved; the man is so infinitely below the level of the girl that he does not deserve to be mentioned in the same breath. It is a crime as black as night when a man robs a white girl of her purity, even though she consents—but she is his equal in moral strength and has powers of self-protection. The negro girl, however, has no such equal chance in the struggle; so, when a white man takes advantage of one who is socially down, who cannot protect herself, he is a fiend of the blackest die. There is need that college men should

create a sentiment of condemnation against such diabolical sin. If we expect the black man to respect our women—and he must—then we must force our white men to keep hands off the negro girl—whether she be pure or impure. There must not be any mingling of the races.

### **Lynching**

Just here one must say a word about the question of lynching. It is a fact that it grows more prevalent in both North and South. The question is, can it be defended? and if not, can it be stopped? In the first place, what is the effect on the colored community of lynching? Does it act as a deterrent of further crime? Not at all. I have talked with a great many negro men, and, so far as a white man can, have got into the spirit and mode of their thought on this subject. Lynching only maddens and enrages the lower class. They look upon the lynched negro as a martyr, who has laid down his life on the altar of a just hatred of his oppressor. I am absolutely convinced that lynching does not frighten the criminal class, and hence does not prevent the awful crime against our women. On the other hand, it has increased this crime, and has put the criminal in the class of martyrs. If we love our women and want to protect them, some less spectacular method of punishment must be devised.

### **It Degrades the White Man**

What effect does lynching have on the whole community? Bad, and only bad. There is

no light to relieve the shadow here. Whenever men, in the name of law and justice, so far forget themselves as to trample every law under their feet, and, in their mad frenzy, even take the lives of honest officials who heroically stand out for their duty and for the law; when, in their mad brutality, they burn or hang or riddle with bullets a wretched criminal supposed to be guilty of this crime — though it occasionally happens that he is not—just so often is the self-respect of the community lowered, and the sacredness of law is broken down. The effect is brutalizing and demoralizing. The result of this disregard for law is seen on every hand. It comes out in the night riding in Kentucky, in the Reel Foot Lake tragedies in Tennessee, and in numerous other ways. As we sow, so shall we reap. If we sow mobs, and violence, and disrespect for courts of justice, we shall surely reap murders, lawlessness and debased public opinion. This is a very high price to pay for the luxury of a little bloodthirsty revenge.

#### **Does not Prevent Publicity**

But some one says that we cannot afford to humiliate our women by bringing them into public for the trial of the criminal. No, surely not, but the trial can be conducted with closed doors. Would this be more humiliating than what now takes place? Does not the infuriated mob take the criminal before the victim if she is alive and ask her to identify him? There is no privacy, no decorum, not even lack of publicity. Nothing could be more public, nothing could be

more revolting to real womanhood than our present methods.

### Defeats Justice

And, last of all, justice cannot be done by a frenzied mob. In a Republic such as ours, every man is supposed to have the right of a trial, the right to defend himself against false accusations. A mob never reasons, it does not weigh evidence, it simply acts in the madness of its fury. I quote a case in point: "William McArthur has been for many years the janitor of a white church in a former slave State. He owns a farm and city house; has a bank account, and could loan money more easily than most of the church members he serves. His reputation for character is as good as theirs. When, therefore, a disreputable white woman attempted to blackmail him by threatening to charge him with assault on a child, he naturally went to the church officers for advice. They believed in him as they did in each other, but put him on a midnight train for California. To his Northern pastor it was incredible that a man of his reputation should have to flee like a thief. The answer was: 'This community is likely to lynch first and investigate afterwards.' So McArthur went—he could afford to—saying, with pathetic humor, 'I always wanted to travel West, anyhow.' After six months he felt safe to come back and take up his work. Not long after the community did lynch three negroes on an Easter morning. The grand jury, investigating afterward, found that two of them were certainly innocent. Only bay-



onets saved the negro quarter from burning. Then McArthur came to his pastor to know where, under the stars and stripes, a self-respecting and respected black man could buy his own vine and fig tree, and go and sit down under them in the ordinary security of Christian civilization."

"Now McArthur's character is fixed so that adversity, while it seams his brow and weights his steps, does not make a social rebel of him; but his boy, when I last saw him, was behind the bars."

"Now, I charge that America did not give McArthur's boy a square deal. Of course, he is a responsible soul, with heart, will and conscience enough to make some impression on his own moral destiny. Let him bear his full share of the blame; but let us weigh this: he had felt the helplessness of the property-owning negro before the blackmailer; had seen his father a fugitive at midnight, his life hanging upon an idle word; *had heard just men confess their inability to protect one in whom they had all confidence*; had vainly longed for a fatherland which could guarantee somewhere a peaceful death to one who had lived in honor; had smelled the burning flesh of innocent men of his own race. Besides all this, his own weakness had been trafficked in by a venal police power. Such things are not calculated to make a young negro into a model citizen. You tell me that after all the cord and the torch are rare, that statistically one is more likely to die from falling off a step-ladder at home than a negro is to be lynched. I

reply that when one has once come under the shadow of such a tragedy he can never forget it. It stamps his imagination for all time and sears his soul against the social order in which it is tolerated.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Sentiment Against Lynching Needed**

It is ours to create a sentiment of justice, of respect for law, of reverence for the authority of the courts. No nation can stand where its law is not respected and where any chance mob rises up and in the name of justice breaks every law of the land, and tramples justice under its feet.

### **Justice in Petty Crimes**

The negro should get justice, not only in this respect, but also in petty crimes. We need to use our influence here to see that he does get justice. He needs justice in the courts, but he does not get it; far too infrequently he is treated leniently because his white friend pleads his cause, and again, too frequently, he has no chance because there is no friend at court. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the negro does not get full justice at the bar of the law.

### **Justice in Public Conveyances**

Neither does he get fair treatment in many public conveyances. I once asked Prof. John Wesley Gilbert, one of the best educated and most thoroughly Christian negroes in the South, what he thought of the “Jim Crow” laws. His

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<sup>1</sup> “Christian Reconstruction in the South,” pp. 204-5.

reply was that he had no objection to them if they were fairly administered. But, of course, they are not. We all know that. Some cheap, white man who happens to be in authority treats the negro with disrespect and abuses him, lest some one may think that he, the conductor, is not better than they. Professor Gilbert told me he never rode on the car with his wife, lest some cheap conductor might insult her, and he would do as any other man, defend her, and a mob would be the result. This is not justice, it is not humanity, it is not Christianity. We must change it.

### **Negro Self-Sufficiency**

Lastly, if we are to have perfect distinctness of life in this section, we must make the negro sufficient unto himself. So long as all honor lies in being associated with the white man, the negro will want social intermingling. So long as there are none of his own race that can meet him on a high plane and can satisfy the longings of his soul, just so long will he be driven to seek fellowship with white men. But build him up, make him sufficient in himself, give him within his own race life that which will satisfy, and the social question will be solved. The cultivated negro is less and less inclined to lose himself and his race in the sea of another race. As he develops, he is finding a new race consciousness, he is building a new race pride. He no longer objects to being called a negro—it is becoming the badge of his race and the mark of his self-sufficiency. We have nothing, therefore, to

fear from giving him a chance. With every new chance he becomes more satisfied to live his life within the pale of his own race. If ever the negro is to become an efficient workman and a real economic factor, it will be because he has so far been elevated in his desires and needs that only constant labor can satisfy his wants. We shall increase his efficiency by increasing his wants. If ever he is to become a good citizen, it will be because he has been so elevated as to desire decency and honor, and not because he fears the law if he lives otherwise. If he is to be kept as a separate and distinct race, without any desire to mingle in social life with the white race, it will be by making his race so self-sufficient that he can find his desires, his ambitions, his social longings satisfied within his own ranks. This must come through the elevation of the whole race.

### **We Need not Fear Advancement**

We have nothing to fear from the advancement of the negroes. It is a poor race which can sustain the position it has won only by forever crowding down other races that come into competition with itself. For my part, I do not believe the white race need take any such position. We shall be able to hold our own and care for our own, however great the advancement of the negro race may be. Rather, my fear is that the negro race in the South will remain so backward, that it will remain so ignorant, that it will remain so far in the rear of civilization, that we of the South will forever be held down by the

weight of our helpless neighbors, and allow the people of other sections of our country to march on and leave us hopelessly behind in our wealth, in our civilization, and in our culture.

### **Negro Needs Encouragement**

Let us encourage the negro race to advance as rapidly as possible; let us give him all the chance we can. He does not need to be held back or discouraged; he needs to be cheered on. He needs to have held before him the records of high endeavor. No boy has ever grown great by believing that his life was worthless and his ability below the average. No race will ever become useful and industrious by being brow-beaten and discouraged. However difficult the task, we must bring the negro to believe in himself. We must make him feel that he is capable of being a true man. We must help him to become sufficient unto himself. Any other course on our part is the madness of a slow suicide, for we rise or fall with the moral power of our section.

### **Will We Stand the Test**

Ours is, perhaps, the most difficult task that has been set before the people of any section of America. It will require more patience, it will cost more faith, it will need more persistence, it will demand a truer sympathy, and it will require more Christian courage to solve this great question than any other question that faces the American people. If we are faithless in this trust, woe be to ourselves and our successors!

But if we are faithful, the very difficulty of our task will mean a greater manhood and a brighter glory than a lesser task could give. I have faith that the educated men of the South will not bewail their fate, but that they will, with the strength of men, meet and master these stupendous difficulties. *It is not the negro that is on trial before the world, but it is we, the white men of the South.* The world is looking on to see whether we shall have sufficient wisdom, sufficient courage, sufficient Christian spirit to lend a helping hand to the race that is down. May the spirit of the Christ, the Friend of Men, give us strength to stand the test.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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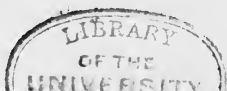
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